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OLIVER CROMWELL:

AN

Historical Romance.

EDITED

BY HORACE SMITH, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"BRAMBLETYE HOUSE."

Yet is the tale, *true* though it be, as strange,
As full, methinks, of wild and wondrous change,
As any that the wandering tribes require,
Stretched in the desert round their evening fire;
As any sung of old in hall or bower
To minstrel-harps at midnight's witching hour.

ROGERS'S *Poems.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1840.

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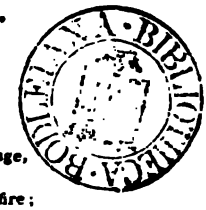

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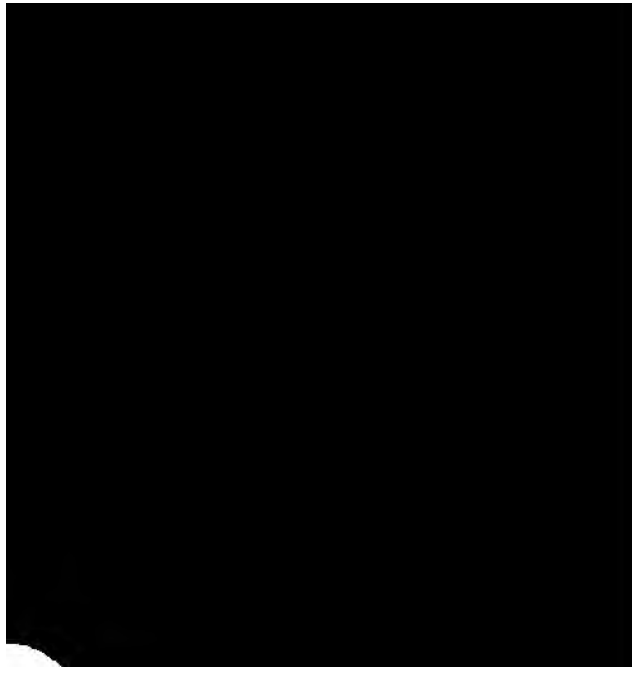
THE

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

It is no slight evidence of the superior importance attached to the life and times of Cromwell, that while most of our legitimate sovereigns are allowed to repose quietly in their coffins, undisturbed by any other inquest than that of the general historian, the Lord Protector is constantly finding new and special biographers: and it is not less honourable to the character of that illustrious man, than to the candour of his recent chroniclers, that they nearly all concur in vindicating his just fame, by removing some portion of the unmeasured calumny and wrong which party rancour and religious intolerance had combined to heap upon his memory. Dr. Vaughan's "Protectorate" had hardly issued from the press when Mr. Forster's work* was announced, almost simul-

* Oliver Cromwell. Lives of eminent British Statesmen, Vol. VI., of which there is an elaborate and vigorously written notice in the London and Westminster Review for October, 1839.

taneously with the following Historical Novel, which takes the same pre-eminent person for its hero. Dr. Vaughan justly observes, that "History has hardly another man of whom so much has been written, and so little in a friendly spirit," nor can we wonder at this when we recollect that the rival factions of the royalists, the presbyterians, and the republicans, opposite as were the objects for which they severally contended, all agreed in the bitterest hatred of that master-spirit by whom they were coerced and over-

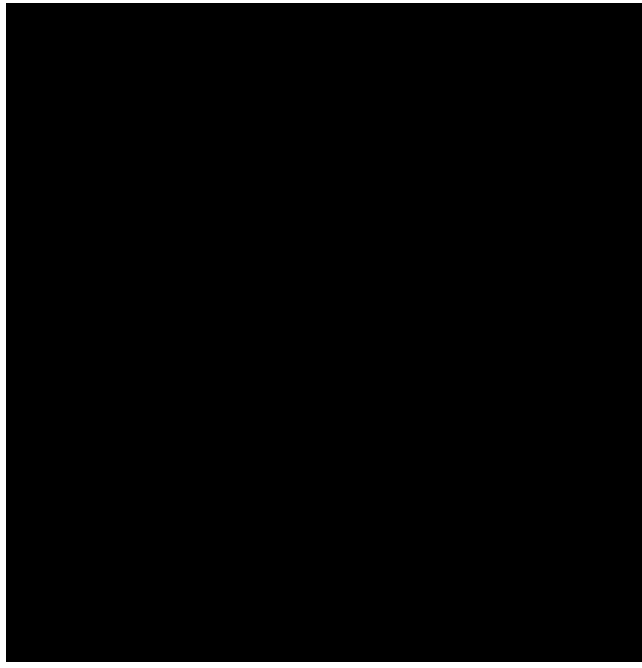


Warburton's admission that he was "the most magnanimous of usurpers," or Burke's still more liberal concession, that when such men put themselves at the head of a nation, "they are not so much usurping power, as asserting their natural position in society."

An Editor's preface, even to a novel bearing the name of Cromwell, is no place for an analysis of his character; but as the sanctity and purity of his private life, except in early youth, have never been impeached, and as the accusations against him in his public capacity mainly resolve themselves into the charges of inordinate ambition and consummate hypocrisy, a few words may perhaps be allowed upon those counts of the indictment.

It will be observed that in the following work the hero is not only made to sanction the questionable tradition of his having once seen a vision, which assured him that he should ultimately become the first man in England, but actually assigns that prophecy as a sort of divine authority for his lofty aspirations. That a religious enthusiast like Cromwell, in an age of great spiritual excitement, when heaven-prompted dreams and supernatural revelations were illusions of almost daily occurrence, should

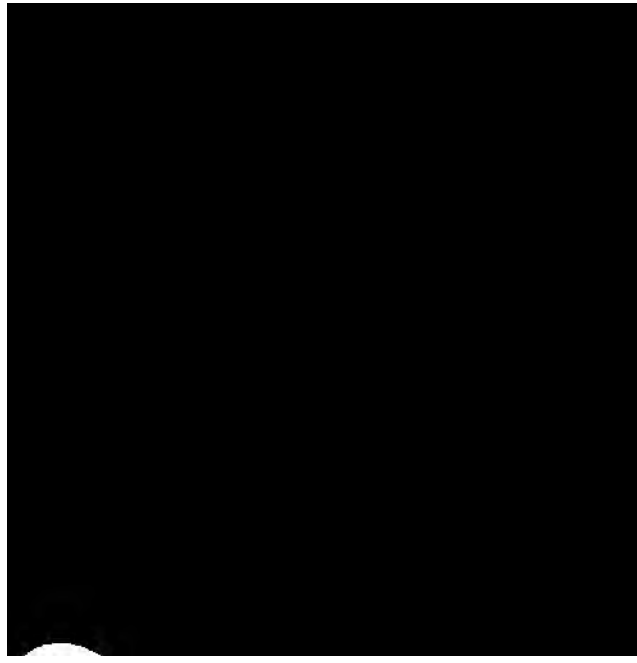
conjure up a prophesying phantasm is probable enough; and, indeed, Mr. Forster has adduced abundant evidence to prove that in his boyhood he was subject to morbid hypochondriacal paroxysms, which savoured of temporary hallucination. But it is not probable, if both "fate and metaphysical aid" had thus conspired to "have him crowned withal," that he should have remained a mere plodding country-gentleman until his fortieth year, without a single attempt to realize this stimulating prediction, had he been naturally of an ambitious tempera-



haps be more philosophical to affirm, as a general proposition, that characters are rather created than developed by circumstances; a view of human faculties and impulses which will explain many of the seeming contradictions in the opposite aspects of Cromwell, at different periods of his life. Of these external influences the importance, as to results, will of course be commensurate with the power and aptitude of the mind upon which they operate, and we may fairly estimate the superiority of Cromwell's intellect by the skill and courage with which he seized upon opportunities, however unexpected, and moulded them to the lofty purposes which they suggested, and almost called upon him to execute. The civil war gave him rapid promotion in the army—promotion led him to qualify himself for higher command;—his first victory inspired confidence;—confidence ensured success; and thus the country-gentleman, whose primary exertions in parliament bore reference to the draining of the Cambridge fens, eventually became Lord Protector.

Ambition seems to have been the result rather than the cause of his elevation; and when once exerted, it found its gratification in the aggrandizement of his country rather than of himself;—

in the realization of his patriotic boast that he would cause the name of a Briton to be as much respected throughout the world as ever was that of an antique Roman;—in raising England from the prostration and contempt in which he found her, and into which she so quickly relapsed after his death, to a condition of greater power and dignity than she had ever attained under the most fortunate of her lawful sovereigns; and above all, in enforcing religious toleration, a lofty object, of which, notwithstanding the great peril of its maintenance, in an age of sectarian



often lapses into dissimulation, and not infrequently the process is removed, while the parties themselves remain totally unconscious of the interchange. How then shall others penetrate these inscrutable workings of the human mind? Cromwell's advancement to supreme power in England, and to permanent influence as an European sovereign, assumed so much the appearance of a miracle, that it might well confirm him in the belief of his being a chosen instrument of the Lord, and might thus preserve to the last, in all their ardour, sanctity, and integrity, those devout convictions which, having been imbibed in boyhood, seem to have "grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength."

From political hypocrisy we shall not attempt to defend him further than by inquiring what king or statesman, either before the days of Machiavel, or since, has ever scrupled to employ finesse in the exercise of his craft? If such men be justified in concealing their real purposes and effecting false ones, why should we condemn the use of similar weapons in the Lord Protector, assailed as he was on all sides by the machinations and manœuvres of many furious factions, and exposed to ever-recurring treasons, strata-

gems, and plots against his authority and his life? To open evidences he had invariably opposed the courage of the lion: against secret foes he had no other defence than by recurring to the cunning of the serpent. As a general position it may safely be affirmed, that whenever he was driven to measures of a severe and despotic nature, or descended to the practice of artifice and duplicity, it was against his better nature, and under the coercion of a stern necessity, which rendered such courses absolutely necessary to his self-preservation. Dr. Vaughan

great actions; and though his portrait be undoubtedly drawn by a friendly hand, no competent judge will deny that it presents, upon the whole, a faithful and a striking likeness, executed by an artist of no common powers.

It may be thought, too, by some, that the unfortunate Monarch and his Queen are painted in darker colours than they deserve; a charitable conclusion which history and truth will hardly warrant. After making all due allowance for the despotic principles in which Charles had been educated, for the sinister influence of his queen, and the evil counsels of headstrong and incompetent advisers, misfortunes which go far to explain, if they cannot extenuate his misdeeds, enough will remain to convict him substantially, if not literally, of every thing laid to his charge in the ensuing pages. Not until after repeated and flagrant confirmations of utter faithlessness was Cromwell driven to assert in the House of Commons, that "the King was a very able man, but withal a great dissembler; one in whom no trust could be reposed, and with whom, therefore, they ought to have nothing to do for the future." For the groundwork of the intercepted letter in the novel, wherein the King boasts of his trickery with Ireton and Cromwell, and expresses a hope that instead of a silken

garter, he shall live to fit them with a hempen rope, there is the authority of Roger Coke; whom Hume, however, calls "a very foolish and passionate historian, totally unworthy of credit." The circumstances attending the seizure of the letter in question, seem to have been taken, with very little embellishment from Lord Broghill's memoirs.

The fictitious characters introduced are few in number, and generally kept subordinate to the historical personages, a proof of the author's good judgment; for the times were so stirring, the

CROMWELL.

BOOK I.

Not to the embattled field
Shall the achievements of the peaceful gown,
The green immortal crown
Of valour, or the songs of conquest yield.
Not Fairfax wildly bold,
While bare of crest he hewed his fatal way
Through Naseby's firm array,
To heavier dangers did his breast oppose
Than Pym's free virtue chose
When the proud force of Strafford he controlled.

AKENSIDE.

CROMWELL.

CHAPTER I.

Can this be He—
That hath no privilege of gentle birth,
Beauty, nor grace, nor utterance sublime
Of words persuasive, nor the bloodbought skill
That wins i'the foughten field?—

"Even as you will, fair sir!—Though, an you ride for Huntingdon this night, and wish not, ere it be two hours the later, that you had tarried here at the White Dragon, then am not I called Walter Danforth, nor have I drawn good ale in Royston these forty years and better!"

With this prophetic sentence did the lord of cup and can wind up a long narration of roads impassable, and bridges broken, and "all the moving accidents of flood and field," with which, according to time-honoured usage among the heroes of the spigot, he was endeavouring to beguile the lated wayfarer. In the present instance, however, it would seem that the ominous warning of the worthy Boniface was destined

of the wild Abruzzi, and the yet wilder Pyrenean hills of Spain, to ponder gravely on a late ride, or a sprinkled doublet, among these chalky wolds of Hertfordshire."

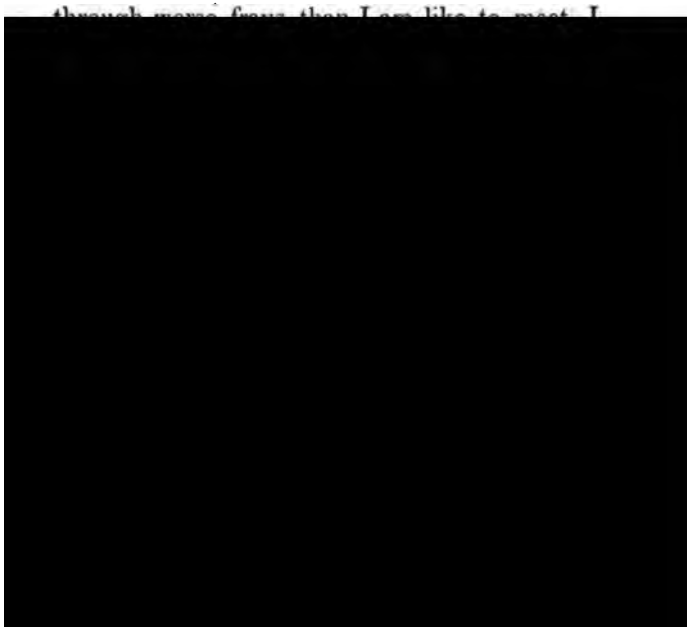
"Ay! were that all"—returned the other, heaving a long breath after the potent draught by which he had exhausted the flagon, and eyeing wistfully the coins which had dropped with so sweet a jingle into his greasy palm,—"Ay! were that all; but there are worse customers on Ermine-street than darkness, or storm either—though the clouds be mustering so black in the west yonder, over the woods of Potton. Wise men ride not forth nowadays an hour after sundown, nor earlier save in company."'

"Then must Old England be sore changed, since last I left her," replied the traveller, a shade of thought or sorrow, for it might be either, crossing his features, and not entirely effaced by the frank smile, which followed it.

"And if she be"—he paused, unwilling, as brave men ever are, to utter sentiments, which might, however justified by the occasion, sound boastfully.

"And if she be?" inquired the interested Walter, seeing that his guest hesitated to complete his sentence,—"and if she be sore changed?"—

"Why then hath Brown Bess borne me



pointedly alluded, is not perhaps a question of more than ordinary moment, unless it be from the vast conception of their prowess which appears to have been entertained by the landlord of the White Dragon; for, in truth, the gentleman who had earned his ill-will merely by a natural reluctance to tarry in Royston, when his occasions called him elsewhere, was of very different mould from one of whom it would be said, that he was like to fall an easy or unresisting prey to any who should dare dispute his progress. Removed alike from the greenness of inconsiderate youth, and from the inactivity of advanced age, the rider might be looked upon as exhibiting a specimen of manhood, in the full vigour of its endowments, both mental and corporeal, as fair as is permitted by the imperfections of humanity. Considerably above the ordinary height of men, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and thin-flanked, he sat

his charger with an ease and firmness resulting more from natural grace, and flexibility of limb, than from the practised art of the *manège*. His eye was clear and even quick, though thought and calmness seemed to belong, rather than energy or fire, to its general expression—qualities belied neither by the broad imaginative forehead, nor by the firm and slightly-compressed outline of his lips. He wore a small mustache, but neither beard nor whiskers, al-

the notorious master Prynne, on the "Unloveliness of Lovelocks."

The dress of this cavalier, a loose velvet jerkin of that peculiar shade which, from being the favourite colour of the greatest painter of his day, has been dignified with the immortal title of Vandyke, was slashed and broidered with black lace and satin; tight breeches of buff leather guarded with tawny silk, high boots, and massive spurs, completed his attire; all save a broad-leafed hat of dark gray beaver, with one black ostrich feather drooping, from the clasp which held it, over the left eyebrow. His military cloak of sable cloth and velvet was buckled to the croup of his war-saddle, while from beneath the housings of the bow peered out the heavy pistols, which had not long before supplanted the lance, as the peculiar weapon of the horseman. A long rapier, with its steel scabbard and basket-hilt of silver delicately carved,

hung from a shoulder-scarf of the same colour with his doublet, matched by a poniard of yet more costly fabric in his cordovan leather girdle.

When it is added, that the mare, which he had styled Brown Bess, was an animal that might be pronounced unrivalled, for the rare union she displayed of strength and beauty, of English bone and high Arabian blood—the latter manifested in the clean limb, full eye, and

rustling harvest-field, and the rich orchard, and before the thoughts of change, decay, and death, are forced upon the mind by the sere leaf and withered herbage. The day had been mild and calm, and though evening was far advanced, the sun was still shooting his slant rays over the rounded summits and grassy slopes of the low hills, through which the ancient Roman way holds its undeviating course. Ere long, however, the clouds, of which the landlord had spoken as gathering so darkly to the westward, though at that time visible only in a narrow streak along the edge of the horizon, began to rise in towering masses, until the light of the declining day-god was first changed to a dark and lurid crimson, and then wholly intercepted. After a while the wind, which had been slight and southerly, veered round, and blew in fitful squalls, now whirling the dust and stubble high into the air, and

again subsiding into a stillness that, from the contrast around, seemed unnatural. Such was the aspect of the night when the sun set, and the little light which had hitherto struggled through intervals of the increasing storm-cloud waned rapidly to almost utter darkness.

To render the traveller's position yet less enviable, he had already passed the open country, and was now involved in the mazes of scattered

daylight utterly deserted him, its last glimpse barely sufficing to show that the bridge had been carried away, and that the river was apparently unfordable; since a miry track wandered away from the brink to the left hand, as though in search of a place where it might pass the current, and resume its natural direction to the northward.

While he was considering what course it would be most advisable that he should pursue a few large heavy drops of rain plashed on the surface of the gloomy stream, warning the stranger to hasten his decision. Then, as he turned to follow, as best he might, the devious and uncertain path before him, the windows of the heavens were opened, and down came the thick shower, pattering on the thirsty earth, and lashing the river's bosom into a sheet of whitened spray. Thoroughly drenched, and almost hopeless of recovering the true direction

of his journey until the return of daylight, it yet was not a part of that man's character to hesitate, much less to falter or despair. Having once determined what it would be for the best to do, he went right onward to his purpose; though it oftentimes required the full exercise of spur and rein to force the gallant animal which he bestrode, against the furious gusts and pelting storm.

nothing; and, though for many minutes he awaited the return of the electric light before attempting to stem the unknown ford, with that singular perversity, which even things inanimate and senseless at times seem to exhibit, the flashes returned no more. Still, no word of impatience or profanity rose to his lip, as he spurred the reluctant mare resolutely down the steep descent, holding his pistols, which he had drawn from their holsters, high above his head. At the first plunge, as he had well expected, all foothold was lost, and nothing remained but a perilous swim, not without considerable risk of finding an impracticable bank at the further side; but, whether it was the result of skill or fortune, or more probable than either, a combination of the two, after a few rough struggles, and a scramble through the tenacious mire, horse and man stood in safety on the northern verge.

Not yet, however, could the adventures of

that night be deemed at an end; for, having once deviated from it during the hours of darkness, it was no easy matter to recover the line of the high-road. The storm, it is true, after a while abated, and the by-path into which he struck was sufficiently hard to enable the cavalier to travel at a pace more rapid than he had tried since quitting Royston; but, notwithstanding this, so much time had been lost, and

that the light was in motion, and at a smaller distance than he had at first conjectured; and, though there might have been grounds for suspicion and distrust to the weak or timid, in the place and manner of its appearance, quickening his pace to a gallop, and somewhat altering his course, he rode straight for the object. Five minutes brought him to a bank and ditch, evidently skirting the road of which he was in quest. The clatter of the horse's hoofs, as he leaped the trifling obstacle, and landed safely on the rough pavement of the Roman way, was, it should seem, the first intimation of his approach that reached the bearers of the light; for ere he could distinguish more than the figures of two or three rude-looking countrymen, one of them bearing on his shoulders what resembled the carcass of a deer, it was either extinguished altogether, or suddenly veiled from sight.

"They are upon us," cried a hoarse voice, "shoot, Wilkin," and instantly the clang of a steel cross-bow, and the whistle of the heavy bolt, as it narrowly missed the rider's ear, showed that the mandate was complied with as promptly as delivered.

"Hold! Hold your hands!" he shouted, "or ye will fare the worse. Ye know me not, nor care I aught for ye!"

"Fare the worse, shall we?" interrupted the

at him with a crow-bar, or a quarter-staff, the quick tramp of coming horsemen was heard upon the road behind him, and with their swords drawn, as if excited by the shout of the ruffians, two or three persons galloped rapidly to his assistance.

"What knaves be these?" inquired a loud and dissonant voice, from the foremost of the new-comers, as the cavalier fell back toward his welcome rescuers,—"what knaves be these, that make this coil on the highway?"

"Down with the thieving Girgashites!" shouted another of the riders, ere an answer could be rendered to the querist; and, at the word, he fired a petronel at random, its momentary flash displaying the marauders struggling as best they might, through a strong blackthorn fence, which parted the road from a wild tract of coppice, glade, and woodland.

"Deer-stealers, master Oliver," he continued,

reslinging his now useless weapon, "after the herds of my Lord de la Warr! but I have scared them for the nonce!"

"More shame to thee, Giles Overton," cried the same voice which had first spoken, "and more sin likewise, to use the carnal weapon thus in causeless strife; setting the precious spirit of a being like to, or—it may well be—better than, thyself, upon the darkling venture of chance-medley; and bartering a human life against the

vouchsafed to preserve thee for a chosen vessel, —have we, I would say, come in season to protect thee from these sons of Ammon ?"

"Thanks to your timely aid, fair sir," replied the cavalier, not a little astonished at the strange address of his preserver, for he had but recently returned to his native land after protracted absence, and, at the time of his departure, the language of puritanism was not yet in vogue. "I am uninjured; and now, I pray you to increase yet further this your kindness, by informing me the straightest road for Huntingdon; it cannot be, I do suppose, far distant."

"Good lack—a stranger—by your questioning," answered he who had been called Oliver. "Huntingdon do I know right well—ay! even as one knoweth the tabernacle of his abode, and the burial-place of his fathers; but I profess to you that it is distant by full thirteen miles, and those of sorry road. But ride thou on with me

to Bourne, some three miles further, and I will bestow thee at a house where thou mayest tarry until morn—the Fox tavern I would say—Phineas Goodenough, my glove hath fallen, I pray thee reach it to me—a clean house truly, kept by a worthy man—yea, verily a good man, one that dwelleth in the fear of the Lord alway."

"A stranger am I, doubtless," returned the other, "else had I not inquired of thee that

"And what knowest thou, so I may ask it," queried Oliver, "of Hampden or John Milton? Truly I took thee for a carnal-minded person, but, of a surety, it is not for a man to judge!"

"For what it liketh your wisdom to mistake me, I know not; nor, to speak frankly, do I care greatly," replied the other; "but, to satisfy your question, of Hampden I know nothing, save that the mode of his resistance to that illegal claim of ship-money hath reached my ears, even where the tongue of England would have sounded strangely. John Milton, if it concerns you any thing to hear of him, was, and that too for many months, my chosen comrade of the road, and my most eloquent tutor in the classic lore of Italy!"

"In Italy, saidst thou? In Italy, and with John Milton?" inquired Oliver, after a long meditative pause; and, as he continued, his voice had lost much of its harshness, and

his manner not a little of its offensive peculiarity. "A better comrade couldst thou not have chosen than that pure-minded Christian—that most zealous patriot. Verily, I say to you, that in consorting with that sanctified, elected vessel, you must needs have imbibed some draughts more worthy than the profane and carnal lore of those benighted heathens, whose bestial and idolatrous rites are even now to be found corrupting with their accursed stench the

of truth, to defend this sore-aggrieved and spirit-broken people from the tyrannous oppression of their rulers, and the self-seeking idolatries of those that sit in the high places of the land!"

"Fair sir," replied the cavalier, "you question somewhat too closely, and converse, methinks, too freely for a stranger. That I come, summoned homeward by the rumour of these unhappy broils between our sovereign and his parliament, is not less true, than that I care not either to conceal or to deny it! *Beyond* this—what part soever I may play in that which is to come—pardon my plainness, sir—I do not deem it wisdom to discourse with a chance customer. Nor have I yet, indeed, decided what that part shall be, until I search more narrowly the grounds, and so find out my way, 'twixt overlicence on the one hand, and as it seems to me, intemperance on the other, and too fiery zeal!"

"Edgar Ardenne," returned the puritan, his naturally harsh voice subsiding into a hollow croak,—"Edgar Ardenne,—for I do know you, though, as you have truly spoken me, a stranger,—I tell you now this nation totters on the brink of a most strange and perilous convulsion! We are the instruments—vile instruments it is true, but still instruments—in the hands of Him who holds the end of all things. Watched have we and prayed, yea wrestled

on high, and therefore shall we venture! And fail we or succeed, mark my words, Edgar Ardenne, for thou shalt think on them hereafter —thy lot is cast with ours! Thy spirit is of our order, thy heart *is* with us and thy tongue *shall be*, yea, and thy sword likewise!"

"How you have learned my name, I comprehend not," answered Ardenne, for so must he be styled henceforth), veiling whatever of suspicion or annoyance he might feel, beneath the semblance of a cold and dignified indifference; "but were it worth the while, I could assure you that in learning this, you have learnt all. What part you play in this wild drama, whether you be hypocrite or zealot, patriot or traitor, I care nothing; but if we meet hereafter, you will learn that neither sophistry nor canting can affect my head, nor the dark phrensy of fanaticism reach my heart!"

"We *shall* meet," answered the stranger, "we *shall* meet again and shortly! and then shall you too learn if I be saint or hypocrite, if I be patriot or traitor! and, above all, then shall you learn if, in these things that I have spoken, I be a lying prophet, or a true! But lo you now, this is the Fox at Bourne, and here comes honest Langton, to whose good offices I do commit you!"

As he spoke, they drew up their horses before

employed in scrutinising, by the illumination which streamed full upon them, the features of his singular companion, who had paused for a moment to allow his horse to drink, and to hold a whispered conversation with the landlord. There was, however, nothing familiar to him, though he probed his memory to its lowest depth of youthful recollections, in that manly yet ungraceful figure, or in those lineaments harsh and ill-favoured to the verge of downright ugliness. Ill-favoured was that countenance, indeed, with its deeply-furrowed lines, and its sanguineous colouring; its sunken eyes, twinkling below the penthouse of the heavy matted brows; and its nose prominent, rubicund and swollen. Yet was there a world of thought, in the expansive temples, and the massive forehead, and an expression of firmness that might restrain an empire, in the downward curve of the bold mouth, and a general air of high

authority and indomitable resolution, pervading the whole aspect of the man. The head of this remarkable-looking individual, at a period when the greatest attention was lavished on the hair by all of gentle birth, was covered with coarse locks, already streaked with gray, falling in long disordered masses on either cheek, and down the muscular short neck, from underneath a rusty beaver, steeple-crowned, and unadorned by feather, loop, or tassel. Instead of the

same unseemly stuff with his cloak and doublet. The only part of his appointments, which would not have disgraced the commonest gentleman, was his horse, a tall gray gelding, of great power and not a little breeding; yet even he was badly accoutred with mean and sordid housings.

Such was the appearance of the person whose conversation had not been listened to by Edgar Ardenne without deep interest; and now — even while he confessed to himself that the man's frame and features entitled him to no regard as a person of superior caste or bearing, there was still something in his air, which produced an indescribable effect on the mind of the cavalier, forcing him, as it were, despite his senses, to admit that he was in some wise remarkable, above, and at the same time apart from, ordinary mortals, and not

unlike to one who might be indeed the mover of great changes in the estate of nations.

While Edgar was yet gazing on him with ill-dissembled curiosity, the stranger, in his loud hoarse notes, bade him adieu, and striking at once into a rapid trot, was swallowed up with his companions in the surrounding gloom. Edgar, after a fruitless effort at ascertaining from the saintly and abstracted publican the name and quality of his late companion, applied

CHAPTER II.

A gentle being, delicately fair;
Full of soft fancies, timorous, and shy;
Yet high of purpose, and of soul so firm,
That sooner shall you the round world unsphere
Than warp her from the conscious path of right;
A bright domestic goddess, formed to bless,
And soothe, and succour—oh, most meet to be
The shrined idol of a heart like his.

Two days had elapsed, and the third was already drawing toward its close, since the encounter of the cavalier with his saintly ally; for the sun, scarce elevated thrice the breadth

of his own disk above the horizon, was now almost perceptibly declining in the west, though he still darted long pencilled rays of light athwart the landscape, from between the folds of gauzelike mist which veiled his splendours from the eye.

One of these straggling beams had found its way into a nook, as sweet as ever poet sung, or fairy haunted. It was an angle in one of those

foxgloves; canopied by the dense umbrage of the broad-leaved sycamore, the gnarled and ivy-mantled oak, or the lighter and more graceful ash; and watered by a tiny brooklet, that stole along, now on one side, now on the other, of the rarely-trodden path, here tinkling over its many-coloured pebbles with a mirthful music, there silently reflecting the tufted rushes, and the mossy log that spanned its surface with a sylvan bridge—that solitary nook might well have furnished forth a tiring-room for Shakspeare's wild Titania.

Nor, though the days of Puck and Oberon were already numbered with the things that had been, did that lone bower lack its presiding genius; for on a trunk, cushioned with hoary lichens, and overlooking a crystal basin formed by the rill which undermined its tortuous roots, and had, perchance, in bygone ages, caused its decay and ruin, there sat a female form, love-

liest of the lovely. She was gazing, as at first sight it seemed, Narcissus-like, upon her watery image; but in truth so deeply buried in her own imaginings, that she was no less ignorant of all she looked upon than was the senseless stump on which she leaned so gracefully. She was a girl perhaps of twenty summers; for, looking on her, it had been impossible to reckon save by summers, so sunny was the style of her

that it was by the long dark lashes only, pencilled in clear relief against the delicate complexion of her cheek, that they could be judged large, and suited to the character of her most eloquent features. Of an almost marble paleness, with scarce a rosy trace to tell of the pure blood which coursed so warmly through those thousand azure channels that veined her neck and bosom, there was yet a transparency, a glowing hue, in her fair skin, that spoke of all the lively elasticity of health; while to remove a doubt, if doubt could have existed, the sweet curve of that small mouth, wooingly prominent, was tinged with the rich hue of the dark red carnation. Though Grecian in their outlines, there yet was more of intellect and energy in the expression of her features, than of that poetical repose which forms the general character of the classic model.

The shape of this fair creature, as she reclined

along her rustic couch, though of voluptuous roundness, was rather slight than full; and the ankle, displayed somewhat too liberally by the disordered draperies of her satin riding-dress, was slender as a sylphid's limb. Her dimpled chin was propped, in attitude of busy thought, on so diminutive a hand, as would alone have proved her pedigree from the unconquered race of Normandy, Nor was the

soft dark eyes, and ears that almost swept the ground—one from a number that had followed the fair girl, and now dozed listlessly upon the grass around her—had been for some time rustling among the dewy bushes, and now sent forth a shrill and clamorous yelping, as pheasant after pheasant whirred up on noisy wings into the higher branches, whence they crowed, with outstretched necks, defiance to their powerless assailant.

Still there was no sign in the demeanour of the lady, to indicate that she had marked the sounds, harmonizing as they did with the spirit of the place and hour, and blending naturally with the low of the distant cattle, the cawing of the homeward rooks, and the continuous hum of the thousand insect tribes which were still disporting themselves in the September sunset, not the less merrily that their little

glass of life had already run even to its latest sands.

But anon a noise arose, which, in itself by no means inharmonious, was not so much attuned to the rural melodies around, but that it jarred discordantly on the ear. It was the clear and powerful voice of a man, venting his feelings as he rode along;—for at times the tramp of a horse might be distinguished, when his hoof

again broke forth in the pure poetry of Drummond.

> Thrice happy he, who by some shady grove,
> Far from the clamorous world, doth live his own!
> Though solitary, who is not alone,
> But doth converse with that eternal love!
> O how more sweet is birds' harmonious moan,
> Or the hoarse sobbings of the widowed dove,
> Than those smooth whispers near a prince's throne,
> Which make good doubtful—

As these words passed his lip, the horseman turned the last angle of the winding lane; and for the first time discovering that the free outpourings of his spirit had found a listener, Edgar Ardenne—for the moralist was no other—paused in his sonnet and checked his steed, by a common impulse, and as it seemed a single movement. His eyes flashed joyfully, as they met the large and violet-coloured orbs which the fair girl had raised, at first in simple wonderment, but which now lightened with a gleamy

radiance that he was not slow to construe into delighted recognition.

"Sibyl—sweet Sibyl!"—

"Edgar, can it indeed be you?—welcome, oh, welcome home!"

At once, without a moment's interval, the words burst forth from either, as they hastened —he with impetuous hurry from his charger, she gathering her ruffled robes about her, and rising from her rustic throne with the unblush-

brow and frame that quivered visibly with eagerness, and first ungloving himself, he raised her white hand to his lips, which dwelt upon it even too fervidly for brotherly affection.

A deep blush glowing, the more remarkably from its contrast to her wonted paleness, over brow and cheek, and visible, though with a fainter hue, even upon her neck, and such brief portion of the bosom as might be descried between the fringes of rich lace, that edged her bodice, she yet expressed not aught of wonder or of reluctance at his familiar greeting. Though the small hand trembled in his grasp with a perceptible and quick emotion, it was not withdrawn; nor, while he gazed upon those eloquent eyes, as steadfastly as though through them he would have read the inmost feelings of the soul that so informed them, did she shrink from his evident, though chastened admiration. A moment or two passed ere either again apoke; it

might be that their passionate feelings were better to be interpreted from silence, than expressed by words; it might be that their hearts were full to overflowing, and that so they dared not to unlock those secret channels, lest they might be led—he into such betrayal of his feelings, as is deemed weak and womanish by the great mass of men, themselves too calculating or too cold to feel at all—she into such disclosure of her soul's treasured secret, as oftentimes

"I can hardly trust my eyes," she said in those low and musical tones which are indeed an excellent thing in woman, when they tell me, truant as you are and traitor, that you stand bodily before me. So long have our hearts been rendered sick by hope deferred—so often have we gazed, from peep of morn till the sad close of evening, for your expected—for your promised coming—and gazed but to be disappointed—that now, when you have truly come, we had ceased not to hope indeed and pray, but surely to expect."

"Oh! Sibyl, did you know how many an anxious thought, how many a bitter pang, these wearisome delays have cost me, you would pity, rather than upbraid—"

"Fair words and flowery, good cousin Edgar," she replied, with an arch glance, and a light thrilling laugh, and with such, you

lords of the creation—as in your vanity you style yourselves—deem you can wipe away the heaviest score of broken vows, and perjured promises, from the frail memories of easy and deluded damsels. But, in good sooth, I marvel not that you should slight poor me, when you have questioned nothing, and that too, after a three years' absence, of your noble father; and when you stand here dallying within a scant mile of his presence, sounding your false ex-

ing toward maturity might have brought something of reflection to tame those girlish spirits; but in good faith, I should have known you better. But am I not assured, were it but by your being here so blithe and beautiful, that all goes well at home?"

"Well parried, if not honestly." still laughing, she replied; "and, for your taunts on my demeanour, I defy you!—But help me to my horse, Sir loiterer, and we will homeward; for I do believe, despite your manifold enormities, that you would fain see those who, to your shame be it spoken, will feel more joy to greet you, than you have shown alacrity to do so much as to ask of their well-being. I warrant me, if you had met Sir Henry first, you had not once inquired whether poor I were in existence."

In another moment the lady was mounted on her white palfrey, and with the cavalier beside

her bridle-rein, rode toward her home more joyously than she had done for many a month before. Not, however, in loud mirth, nor even in the sprightly raillery which she had adopted on their first meeting, was her happiness divulged to common ears; but her soft eyes, dwelling fondly on the features, long unseen, of her accepted and acknowledged lover, though they were lowered modestly so often as they caught his answering glances,—and the subdued

love; and by the full expansion of their feelings, unrestrained by the cold formalities of that most heartless intercourse which men have styled society, and untrammelled by any chains, save those instinctive bonds of pure and delicate propriety, which noble natures ever wear about them in the guise of flowery garlands, gracing while they dignify the motions which they in no respect impede.

After a short ride through the windings of that verdant lane,—here rendered almost gloomy by the shadows of occasional woodlands which it traversed, here running past the door of some secluded cottage, its thatched porch overhung with bowering creepers, and its narrow garden gay with tall hollyhocks and autumnal flowers — here looking forth, from intervals in the tall hedges, over some sunny stubble-field on which the golden shocks stood fair and frequent, or some deep pasture, its

green surface dotted with sleek and comely cattle,—they reached a rustic gate of unbarked timber, woven into fantastic shapes, and through it gained admittance into a demesne, as rich as ever was transmitted by its first winner of the bloody hand to a long line of undegenerate posterity.

Even to the wandering and homeless stranger there is a calm and quiet joy in the stately solitude of an English park,—in its broad velvet lawns, sloping southwardly away, studded with

peated tap of the green woodpecker,—in the harsh cry of the startled heron, soaring on his broad wings from the sedgy pool, before the intruder's footstep,—in the lazy limp of the pastured hares, and in the whirr of the rising covey. What, then, must be the feelings summoned by the same picture, to the heart of one who hears in every rural sound, and witnesses in every sylvan scene, the melodies that soothed his earliest slumber, and the sights that nursed his youngest meditation? To him these stately solitudes are peopled with a thousand holy recollections;—the step, perchance, of a departed mother still roams beneath those immemorial trees; her musical voice still speaks to his heart audibly, and in the very tones his childhood listened to, when all its cares were hushed;—to him each bosky bourn and twilight dingle has its memory of boyish exploit, each murmuring rill of boyish reverie.

Home—home—hackneyed as is the thought, and time-worn—what a world of treasured sweetness is there in that one word, Home! To the humblest and to the highest—in sorrow and in mirth—to the needy exile as to the successful adventurer—for ever dear, for ever holy—crowded out, perhaps, from the selfish spirit, by the bustle, the tumult, the conflict of the day—but still returning with undiminished force, when the placid influence of night and

of these—if we could read their souls, have had their moments of repentant thought, their moments of triumphant fondness. What then must be the feelings of a mind like that of Ardenne—a mind, coupling the severe and disciplined philosophy of schools with the warm and wild romance of a poetic fancy—a mind, which had learned wisdom, without learning vice, amid the fierce pleasures and the fiercer strife of a licentious world—a mind, no less unselfish than it was reasonable and regular—a mind, filled with the beautiful principles of that universal love which is honour, and patriotism, and every shape of virtue—virtue, not cold in itself, as the wicked say, and chilling all things that it touches, but genial, and enlivening, and warm with every generous aspiration. What must have been the feelings of a man endowed with such a mind, returning

to his unforgotten home, from years of restless wandering, in pursuit, not of the idol mammon, not of the phantom fame, but of that high philosophy which is derived from the perusal of men, not books; which is learned not in the solitary chamber, nor by the midnight lamp, but on the tented field, and in the dazzling court; at the banquet and the masque; amid the treacheries of men, and the wilier fasci-

exhibited no less in the gushing tear, than in the glittering smile, in the choked voice and suffocating spasm, than in the flashing eye and the exulting pulse?

Enough—Ardenne was for the moment happy, absolutely, and, if aught mortal may be called perfect, perfectly happy. The antiquated hall burst on his vision, as he passed a belt of sheltering evergreens, its tall Elizabethan chimneys sending their columns of vaporous smoke far up into the calm heaven; its diamond-paned oriels glowing like sheets of fire to the reflected sun; its hospitable porch opening wide to admit stranger or guest alike with kindly welcome; its freestone terraces with a group of lazy greyhounds basking on the steps, and a score or two of peacocks perched upon the balustrades, like the ornaments of an eastern throne, or strutting to and fro on the broad flagstones in all their pride of gorgeous

plumage. He saw—he had no words—but his gentle companion might perceive his nether lip to quiver with strong emotion, and a tear, unrestrained by selfish pride, to trickle down his manly cheek.

A heavy bell rang out—there was a bustle, and a rush of many servitors, badged and blue-coated men, with hoary heads and tottering limbs—the heirlooms of the family, transmitted, with the ancestral armour and the ancient plate,

his eyes; not that he mourned, but that he did rejoice, as (in the magnificent words of the Greek lyrist) he beheld his chosen offspring, the stateliest of the sons of men.

CHAPTER III.

Minstrel of freedom.—England's holiest bard.—

quenched in her more lustrous glory. It was one of those evenings, on which we cannot gaze without comparing the pure and passionless quiet of the world above with the fierce solicitudes, the selfish strife, the angry turmoil of the world around us—one of those evenings which, at any time, must infuse a sentiment of peaceful melancholy into every bosom, even of the wild and worldly, but which has at no time so deep an influence on the spirit, as when contemplated from the near vicinity of some large city. The contrast between the chaste paleness of those celestial lamps, and the ruddy glare which glanced from many a casement,—between the perfect calm aloft, unbroken save by the gentle murmur of the wind, and the confused uproar below, rife with the din of commerce, the dissonance of mingled tongues, and now a distant scream, and now a burst of unmelodious laughter,—must needs impress more strongly on the mind than aught of homily or lecture, that

contempt for the mortal world, and the base things its tenants,—that ardent and inexplicable yearning after something of truer and more substantial happiness than we can here conceive,—that wish for "wings like a dove, that we might flee away, and be at rest," which constitutes, perhaps, the most essential difference, as exhibited on earth, between ourselves and the yet lower animals, content to fatten and to perish.

Such was, not improbably, the strain of

country, with leafy elms lining the public way, and many a cultivated nursery, and many a grassy paddock, intervening between the scattered dwellings of the retired trader, or the leisure-loving man of letters.

The countenance of this person, as it was directed with a pensive wistful gaze toward the melancholy planet, receiving the full flood of its lustre, was singular for softness and attraction. He wore no covering on his head, and his luxuriant tresses of light brown hair, evenly parted on the foretop, hung down in silky waves quite to his shoulders. The hues of his complexion, delicately coloured as a woman's, and the somewhat sleepy expression of his full gray eye, accorded well with the effeminate arrangement of his locks, and indeed entitled him to be considered eminently handsome; for there was so much of intellect and of imagination in the forehead, low but expansive, and so many

lines of thought about the slightly sunken cheeks, now faintly traced and transient, but which would, with the advance of years, increase to furrows, that the softer traits, while adding to the beauty, detracted nothing from the dignity and manhood of his aspect. His form, though slight and small, was yet compact and muscular, affording promise of that powerful agility which is paramount even to superior strength, in the use and skill of weapons.

its opinion by nought of pride or circumstance. He might have been an artisan, or merchant of the city, but that the slouched hat lying, with a staff of ebony, beside him on the wall, distinguished him from the flat-capped dwellers to the east of Temple-bar; while his hands, which were delicately white, and tender as a lady's, showed that they had never been exercised in the ungentle labour of a mechanic calling. But, stronger even than these tokens, there was that vivid and inexplicable impress of exalted genius, that looking forth of the immortal spirit from the eyes, that strange mixture of quiet melancholy with high enthusiasm, pervading all his features, which must have made it evident, to any moderately keen observer, that figure or decoration could be but of small avail, when considered as the mere appendages to such a mind.

He stood awhile in silence, though his lips

moved at intervals, perusing the bright wanderers of heaven with a gaze so fixed and yearning, as though his spirit would have looked into the very tabernacle and abode of the Omnipotent. At length he spoke articulately, in a voice deep, slow, majestic, and melodious, but in the unconscious tones of one who meditates or prays aloud, without reference or respect to aught external.

"Beautiful light!" he said, "beautiful lamp

seemed meet Deity to whom to bend the knee,—thou first-born offspring of his first-created gift! thou blessed emanation from his own ethereal glory—what wonder, when I, his humble follower, his ardent, though unworthy worshipper,—when I, an honest though an erring Christian, do strive in vain to wean my heart from love of thee; indoctrinating so my spirit, that I may kiss the rod with which, I am assured too well, He soon will chasten me, in changing the fair light, that glorious essence in which my soul rejoiceth, for one black, everlasting, self-imparted midnight? Yet so it shall be. A few more revolutions of these puissant planets,—a few more mutations of the sweet-returning seasons—and to me there shall be no change again on earth for ever!—no choice between the fairest and the foulest!—no difference of night or day!—no charm in the rich gorgeousness of flowery summer, above the sere and

mournful autumn! — no cheery aspect in the piled hearth of winter!—no sweet communion with the human eye compassionate!—no intercourse with the great intellects of old, dead, yet surviving still in their sublime and solid pages!"

He paused for a space, as though he were too deeply moved to trust his thoughts to language; but, after a moment, drawing his hand across his eyes—

of my sunless season?—what, but to profit, even as best I may, by those good opportunities which his great mercy hath vouchsafed to me; to sow the seed even now, during the fertile autumn, that by his blessing it may swell and germinate during the brumal darkness of the approaching winter, and in his good time give forth to light a crop improved and gloriously surpassing that from which it sprung?—what, but to give thanks alway, and to praise the tender-heartedness and love of Him, to whom it were no harder task to plunge the mind in lunatic and senseless stupor, than to seal up the fount of light to the poor eye,—of Him who, giving all the thousand blessings I enjoy, judges it fitting to deprive me but of one, haply that, from its single loss, others may fructify, and bear good harvest to my use? —Wherefore, oh! merciful and mighty one, be it unto me as thou willest, and thou only!

And, oh! above all things be it unto me, as now, so alway, humbly to cry, and happily, 'Thy will be done!'"

Even as the pious scholar brought his meditations to a close, the footsteps of one advancing, though still unseen, through the mazes of the shrubbery, were heard upon the crisp and crackling gravel; and, ere he had resumed his hat, which was steeple-crowned and of the puritanic fashion, the intruder made his appear-

not, save that I heard the name of St. John pass between them. They await your coming in the summer parlour."

Without further query or reply, the scholar, as if satisfied that his presence was indeed required, traversed the garden with quick steps, and entering the house, a small but cheerful dwelling, through an entrance hung round with maps and charts of statistics or chronology, passed to the chamber in which his guests expected him. It was a pleasant room, with a bay-window looking upon the garden, but cheaply decorated with hangings of green serge, to which a splendid organ, by the first maker of the day, and a choice collection of rare books, several of the number being papyri of great worth, afforded a remarkable contrast. In the recess formed by the window there stood a reading-desk, curiously carved in old black oak, with cushions of green velvet

somewhat the worse for wear, supporting a noble folio bible in the Greek text of Geneva. The table was loaded with a heterogeneous mass of books and papers,—an original manuscript of the Bacchæ of Euripides, reposing on a Hebrew copy of the Septuagint, and a stray duodecimo of Petrarch's sonnets marking the place at which the reader had closed the pages of a huge tome of controversial divinity; while on a marble slab, opposite the chimney, lay a

for a moment or two almost beside them, perceive the presence of their host, who had thus ample opportunity of examining their persons by the light of a brazen lamp, of antique form, with several burners, which hung from the ceiling immediately above the abstracted group.

Nearly opposite the door, with his searching eyes fixed upon another of the company, who was speaking with considerable emphasis, though in an under tone, stood the same individual who had assisted Ardenne on the night of his adventure near to Royston,—wearing the very garb in which he had appeared on that occasion, save that for his riding-boots he had substituted a pair of coarse gray woollen stockings drawn tight to the mid-thigh, with ill-blacked shoes of calfskin laced to the instep, and bearing neither rose nor buckle.

The speaker to whose words he lent so careful heed, was a tall and slender person, handsomely though gloomily attired in a full suit of black, with silken hose and velvet cloak to match, a mourning rapier hanging at his side, though evidently worn for fashion rather than for use. His countenance, though not of pleasant favour, much less such as could be termed handsome, was nevertheless one from which men could not easily withdraw

not worn after the flowing fashion of the cavaliers; but the most remarkable trait of his aspect was the immovable gloom, which overshadowed his dark saturnine features with a cloud so constant, that it has been recorded of him, that seldom, even in his moments of hilarity, was he beheld to smile.

The remaining person of the trio was a finer and more comely man than either of his comrades; fairly proportioned, though not above the middle height; with a brow rather full than lofty, a quick and penetrating eye, and an intelligent expression, thoughtful rather than grave, and with no touch of sternness or morosity on his noble features, lighted up as they were from time to time by a smile of singular and cheerful sweetness. He was habited, as became a gentleman, in a rich garb of maroon-coloured velvet, his costly sword suspended from a scarf of good white

taffeta, and a white feather in his beaver; the whole, though plain enough, if compared with the luxurious bravery of the cavaliers,—whose dresses would oftentimes have been too cheaply rated at a year's income of their patrimony,—conveying an idea of absolute magnificence when viewed beside the simple habiliments of his fellow-visiters.

After he had surveyed this group for a few

sonable. But, of a truth, I had forgotten—I pray you, Master Milton," (for it was no other than the immortal poet, who had deplored, in such heartfelt yet unrepining language, the advent of that dread calamity which had already been predicted to him, by the first physicians of the day, as the sure consequence of his persisting in his arduous and unremitted labours)—"I pray you, Master Milton, know these most worthy and god-fearing gentlemen—this"—motioning with his hand toward the taller and more gloomy figure—"this, my good friend Master Oliver St. John—and this—my well-beloved and trusty cousin, honest John Hampden!"

"Of a truth, Master Cromwell," replied the poet, (in those days better known, by his magnificent and stately prose, for a controversial writer of unequalled power, than by the slight though beautiful effusions of poetry

which hitherto he had cast forth merely as the erratic sports of leisure moments, stolen from graver studies, and not yet as the sublime continuous soarings of his unrivalled genius)—"Of a truth, Master Cromwell, I owe you more of thanks than I am wont to offer, that you have brought to my poor dwelling these, the most constant and the noblest cultivators of that fair vineyard, to the renewal and reform

corrupt, or bigoted, or arbitrary in religious or in civil rule — as the leaders who, above all others, were endowed with the talent, and worth, and, more than these, with the unflinching energy, to wring the iron sceptre of usurped prerogative from the high hand that wielded it with such despotic sway! He greeted them with words savouring more of courteous deference, than of that plain-spoken and uncompromising brevity, on the use of which his party prided themselves so deeply, in their intercourse of man with man; there was, however, nothing of vain or worldly adulation, much less of that fawning sycophancy, that low servile manworship, for which the courtiers of the day were so deservedly contemned by the stern puritans, in his frank though reverential bearing.

After a few seconds spent in civilities, which were accepted, as indeed they were intended,

for the befitting homage of one surpassing intellect to others, though in a different sphere of not inferior merit—homage, degrading not the giver, while it added to the real dignity of the receiver—the party fell into the ordinary demeanour of men familiar, if not with the persons, at least with the minds and principles, each of the others; and the conversation flowed as quietly on the accustomed topics of the

"Have ye received aught new from Ireland," inquired the poet—"ye of the lower house—touching this perilous and damnable rebellion?"

"Ay, of a surety, have we!" answered Cromwell; "full confirmation—full, ay, and overflowing all that we had heard before!"

"All Ulster is in one light blaze!" cried St. John, his dark eye flashing with indignant fire—"the forts all captured; and that most subtle villain, Phelim O'Neil, wading knee-deep—with thirty thousand fanatic and phrensied papists—knee-deep in Protestant and English gore!—Connaught and Leinster revelling in red-handed massacre, and the five counties of the Pale arrayed by the Lords Justices to quell the insurrection, united to their brother rebels!"

"None may conceive the horrors—none may enumerate the sufferings, or recount the wretched

sufferers!" continued Hampden, a deep shade of melancholy settling down on his fine lineaments. "At the least reckoning, twenty thousand of our brethren, men, women, and children, yea, the very infants at the breast, have perished! No insult, no atrocity that Romish perfidy could plan, or fiendish cruelty perform,—no last extremity of famine, cold, or torture,—has been spared to their defenceless victims by the barbarian Irish—their very priests setting the torch

"It is, we fear, too true," said Hampden, in reply to the bewildered looks of the anxious auditor,—"it is, we fear, too true! O'Neil, in his dark proclamation, boasts openly his own authority from the great seal of Scotland! Sir William St. Leger, trusty alike and brave, hath, as we learn, dismissed his levies, and laid down the arms he had assumed on the first outbreak of the rebels, at sight of a commission, with Charles Stuart's manual sign, held by that murderous bigot, Lord Musquerry!"

"And last, not least," sneered Oliver St. John, "Macmahon hath confessed, at shrewd solicitation of the rack, that the original scheme of this rebellion was brought to Ireland, from our gracious king and governor, by Dillon, and the members of the late committee!"

"Of a truth," said Cromwell, in reply to the words of his milder cousin,—"of a truth there may be cause for *fear*, ay, and for grief—yet,

wherefore? Verily 'tis a hard thing to rejoice—to rejoice in the midst of slaughter and abomination! yet who shall deem, or boast himself to know of that which is to come, save He that holdeth the end—I say the end and the accomplishment of all things in the hollow of his hand? But I will tell ye this—yea!—but mistake me not—this will I avouch to ye, that *I* fear not, but do rejoice! 'Tis a sad thing, in truth, that an anointed king, even a king in Israel, should

an open enemy, yea, if he be mightier by tenfold, than one who lurketh privily, beneath the vesture of a friend, looking in secret whom he may devour!"

"Forewarned, indeed, ye are," replied the poet musingly; "and your own fault 'twill be, if ye be not fore-weaponed likewise; for in good sooth, I do believe the lives of none are safe—the lives and liberties of none who dare uplift their voices in defence of England's constitution, or the church's purity!"

"And is it not to this end," cried Oliver,—"is it not to this end that we are watching, even now, with our loins girded, and our lights burning, unto the protection of those that are defenceless, and unto the enlightening of those that sit in darkness?—And is it not to this end that we have now come to thee, John Milton, trusting to gain a strong ally—even a valiant, and a heart-whole, and a spirit-stirring soldier—seek-

ing to learn from thee—so far as it is for man to learn of man—yet, neither confident in worldly wisdom, which is ignorance before the Lord—nor relying altogether on the judgment of a fellow worm, howsoever excellent he may be in the gifts of carnal knowledge—seeking, I say, to learn from thee, the character and principles of one, with whom we do believe that you so long have communed, as to know the thoughts of his heart, ay, and to interpret the workings of his

this same intelligence, the great charge has been laid upon us, by the zealous burghers of the place, of commending to their choice a person who shall honourably fill the seat of him that is departed."

"And how—you would ask John Milton," Cromwell broke in—"for I can read the query on your brow—how, you would ask, can you assist us in this matter? Verily—*thus* for it hath been suggested to our souls, when we were seeking out the Lord in prayer; yea, wrestling with him in the spirit, that he should guide us to a sure election—it was, I tell you truth, I do profess—borne in upon the ears of our minds, as with an audible and spoken voice—ye shall call to aid the man, even the young man, Edgar Ardenne—"

"With whom," interrupted St. John, evidently weary of the prolix verbose haranguing of the other,—"with whom, as we are well as-

sured, you, master Milton, have mingled much in foreign travel, having thereby good opportunity to judge of his opinions, and to learn his heart. We would hear from you, therefore, worthy sir, whether this gentleman of high extraction, born of a race devotedly, I had well-nigh said *slavishly*, loyal—whether this gentleman be indeed, as we would wish to find him, a firm, uncompromising lover of his country;

than I have expended on their embalmed and written thoughts—for years!—and never, I can say it honestly and freely, for I do believe I know his inmost inspirations even as I am conscious of my own—never have I found, or even read of, such a head, combined with such a heart, as that of Edgar Ardenne: a worshipper of wisdom, of liberty, of truth, purer and far more fervently devoted, than the great spirits of the old republics! a scholar in the study, and that too of the ripest; an orator in the forum, strong, stirring, and persuasive; a soldier in the field, well tried, and as well proven; an adorer of all that is beautiful, but one who sees no beauty save in virtue; a Christian, fervent and sincere, yet tolerant, and of much charity: —ambitious, but ambitious only to do good! If ever there was born a man wholly unselfish, that man is Edgar Ardenne. Such—and on my judgment well you may rely—such is the man

whom you would take into your counsels. Gain him, then, gain him, if ye may—for certainly as Edgar Ardenne could achieve aught to benefit his country, though every hope, every feeling, every passion of his soul were listed to oppose it, so certainly would he tread hope, feeling, passion, into the very dust beneath his feet. He has a head so clear, he cannot fail to *see* the right; he has a heart so true, he would not fail—

ye can resolve unpledged to trust him, seek not to sound his views—for as well might ye assay to fathom the most central depths of ocean; seek not to bind his actions—for as well might ye go forth to chain the subtile and pervading lightning; but proffer to him in plain terms the seat, at the free choice of the burghers—and if he do accept it, as well I trust he will, be sure there is no man in England that better knows the duties of a member in the Commons house of Parliament, or trulier will discharge them!"

"You have described," replied the calm and meditative Hampden—"you have indeed described a man, such as there are but few, this side the grave! your words, too, tally well with the surmises I have formed from his known actions."

And would you then," asked the moody St. John, "set so great a matter on the casting of

a die? Do you not know that even now we have but a majority, not overstrong, nor over-certain—that many have already been won, or put to silence—that Hyde and his moderate partisans daily gain strength, and only lack occasion to join the court in open and unblushing servitude?—know you not that Falkland wavers, and that if he go over, ten votes, at least, will instantly apostatize? and would you then elect this cavalier, for such in truth he is

matter we will speak more anon—we have already trespassed over long upon the leisure and the patience of our honourable host."

St. John replied not; and Cromwell, who had perhaps made up his mind already, had fallen into a long and rambling exposition of some doctrinal point, wholly remote from the subject in question, to which Milton listened with a tranquil smile playing about his lip, and with the air apparently of discovering what was the meaning, if there indeed were any, of the wild and ill-digested oratory of the member for Cambridge, at this time just beginning to attract the notice of the house, though no one could, perhaps, assign a cause for his increasing influence.

For a short space, the others spoke apart, warmly, though in an under tone—Hampden, as it seemed, urging on his grave confederate some dubious and unpalatable measure; the

energy of his manner gradually rising, while the opposition of his friend waxed fainter, until the habitual sneer departed from his lip, and the accustomed cloud partially yielded to an opener and more cheery aspect.

"Be it so!" he said, at length, raising his voice, as the discussion was finished by his assent—"Be it so, if you will, and, in faith, I believe you are in the right on't. Now, Master Cromwell," he continued, turning toward

pen,—slight instrument of mightiest powers, whether for good or evil, and, in the hand of the philosopher, prime mover of more potent revolutions than its dread rival and confederate, the mortal sword.

CHAPTER IV.

friends almost, perhaps, as dear as those who girt as with a magic cestus the unforgotten fireside of their childhood, have craved with an insatiate and yearning appetite the well-known aspect of the old home-places—who have languished for a father's blessing, a mother's wistful eye, a sister's holy-kiss—who have felt with the patriotic Syrian, that "Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus," are truly to the exile "better than all the waters of Israel;"—none know, but these, the deep calm happiness of being once again the centre of that sweet domestic circle—of receiving the fond welcome of every living thing—ay, even to the household dog, or superannuated horse, that yelps or whinnies in the fulness of his recognition—of lying down to rest beneath the very curtains, and on the very bed, which had so often wooed them to repose, before they knew the bitterness of sin or sorrow.

Fully indeed, and far more sensibly than it is tasted by the common pilgrim of life's journey, did this impression of tranquil bliss pervade the breast of Ardenne, as he leaned, gazing upon the familiar landscape, from out the open casement of his chamber,—that chamber, which had never for a moment faded from his memory, with its oaken wainscoting and faded tapestries —its angular recesses, peopled by his youthful fantasy with lurking shapes of terror—its plea-

shone reflected from the surface of some quiet water, it lingered even there with a half-shadowed lustre, not flashing out with the bright gleams of gorgeous sunshine, but calmly harmonizing with the spirit of the place and hour. So clear, however, was the mellow light, that the graceful attitudes of the slumbering deer might be distinguished on the open lawns, while the pinion of the gliding owl was seen to glance against the massy shadows of the surrounding forest.

Yet now, although he gazed upon all that was most beautiful of natural scenery, all that was most endeared to him by boyish recollections—although he was surrounded by the very objects that he had most earnestly desired to see—although he was at the very point, which he but yesterday would have esteemed the summit of fruition—he was not happy. It is true, that he had found in her, on whom his

mind had dwelt most fondly and most frequently during his absence, the very being he had loved so fervently of yore—bearing no traces of the years which had elapsed, save in the ripening of her mind to excellent maturity, and in the rounding of her sylph-like figure into the exquisite proportions of young womanhood! It is true, that the father, whom he had honoured and obeyed with that old-fashioned filial reverence, which—ill betide the change!—

own earth-fast island was indeed the home best calculated for the seekers of that sweet domestic quietude, that fireside, church-going happiness —that calm enjoyment of the duties, the labours, and the pleasures of a country life, blent, as these ever are, with a romantic taste for the green fields and slumbering woodlands, the gentle river and the smooth hillside—which have, at all times, formed a feature so distinctive in the English character! But it is no less true, that, even at the moment when his hand might have been said to grasp all that his soul desired, his spirit was disturbed, and his heart ill at ease.

It were perhaps the wisest, as it surely were the happiest, course, for mortals to "take no heed for the morrow." Yet, in a strict sense, obedience to this injunction is perhaps impossible—impossible at least to any man endowed with enough of intellect and mental vigour to

perceive the connextion between present causes and eventual effects—to foresee with prescient sagacity the crop which will spring up to-morrow from the seed laid in the ground to-day!—For who could sit at ease, appreciating the full quality of each delicious viand, and pleasantly debating on the flavour of each fragrant wine, knowing that the sword of Damocles was swinging by a single hair—and that too yielding at every instant to the weight—above

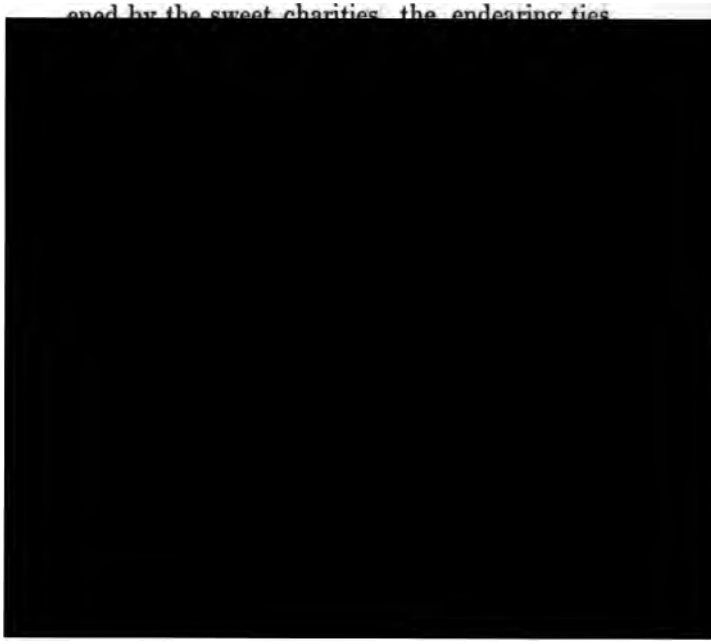
befall his country—he might have surrendered himself to momentary pleasure, careless or ignorant of the approaching woe! And so rare of occurrence, and so brief when they do occur, are the periods, during human life, even of comparative happiness,—perhaps, had he so done, he had been able to look back in after days to more of sunny hours than he could count among the strange and mingled incidents of his eventful life. But, constituted as he was, it was not in his power to fix his gaze on the bright present aspect of the things around him, without observing the huge melancholy clouds which were already rising up in the political horizon, threatening to overshadow with their gloomy pall, and perhaps to overwhelm, in the wild tempest they must soon discharge, the feeble shallop of his fortunes, together with the stronger vessel of the constitution.

At an early period of his life a visiter of south-

ern lands, where he had wandered, not to mark alone the sunny skies and desolated fields, the ruined temples and the beautiful cascades, but to muse on the conditions of the nations once so powerful, and so degraded now; to ponder on their rise and fall; to draw deep lessons of the future from the contemplation of the past; he had learned to cherish liberty the more from having witnessed—if not himself endured—the

which, sooner or later, will point, as surely as the magnetic needle to the north, toward the home of childhood. While on the journey all his thoughts had been of joy—of that serene and moderate happiness, which makes the days flow onward, like a broad and tranquil river, fertilizing some fair plain, rich with the hopes of thousands—beautiful, but with an indescribable and unromantic beauty — presenting none of those wild charms, those scenes at once sublime and lovely to the eye, which mark the course of far-famed torrents amid the savage glens of moorland, moss, and mountain—but leaving on the mind a mingled sentiment of gratitude and bliss that will be fresh and vivid, when the sterner memory of its rival shall have yielded to oblivion. His spirit had looked forward to a long perspective of sunshining years—years not to be degraded by the selfish sloth of luxury; not to be wasted in the mere sports of the field —which useful, ay, and ennobling in their tend-

encies, when partaken but as a relief to grave and solid duties, so surely brutalize if they be exalted to a daily occupation ; not to be dreamed away in apathetic musings and would-be philosophy, but to be dignified by high and patriotic labours, by the cultivation of the sciences and arts, by the promotion of public virtue, and domestic worth, to be enlivened by the gay communion of the noble and the good ; to be soft-



ginations never perhaps to be realized, which poured their gilded halo round the heart of Ardenne; and when he felt his foot once more securely planted on the parent soil, when all those gushing influences of mingled ecstasy and tenderness swept in an overwhelming torrent over his every sense, he deemed that all his hopes were on the point of being gratified, that he was indeed about to be the happiest of men. The rumours of evil seemed to fade away; the menaces of political discord, perchance even of civil strife, to mutter only at a distance, if not unheard, at least unworthy to create solicitude; the fears that would at times arise unbidden, clouding with darker shades the bright views of his mental painting, were all forgotten. And when he arrived, as he had done that night, at the dear home of his boyhood—when he perceived the mighty pleasure that lightened forth from every feature of

his admiring father—when he found himself revelling in the manifest affections of his destined bride, and knew that she partook of the same rapture, and in no less degree,—he for a while abandoned his whole soul to the tide of feeling, he suffered himself to be carried away by his enjoyment of the present, careless and fearless of the future; he felt, perhaps for the first time of his life, during those brief hours, that elastic buoyancy of temper which seems to

However this may be, it nevertheless is certain that scarcely had Ardenne retired from that delicious intercourse to the seclusion of his own apartment, ere the exhilaration, which had almost surprised himself while he indulged it, gave place, first, to an uncertain sense of restlessness, then to a consciousness of some impending evil increasing in distinctness, moment after moment, till it assumed at length the shape of an anxiety, if not a fear—positive, well-defined, and, alas ! but too well grounded. Nothing, indeed, but the whirl of mingled sensations leaving room for nought of serious meditation, could have, even thus far, blinded Ardenne to the difficulties and the dangers of his future course. The boasted loyalty of his forefathers,—their fond devotion, stronger almost than life, to the king, not as a person, but as a portion, and that the most important, of the state,—their orthodox and sturdy zeal, condemn-

ing all as sectaries and fanatics, who differed in the least from the established canons of the church,—their prejudiced affection for all that was antique, even for antique error!—their holding up all those who would improve or alter, with the most diffident and sparing hand, as innovators on the good old times, as levellers of rank and order, as iconoclasts of the holy constitution, as traitors to their monarch, to their country, to their God!

he felt in contradiction of those hopes which, even in spite of hope, he knew unfounded—would be too like to deem the slightest deviation from the footsteps of his idols, as the worst apostacy!—the most respectful opposition to the arbitrary will of the misguided sovereign, as flat rebellion!—the most moderate interference in behalf of liberal views and privileges of the people, as a banding, against the legitimate aristocracy of the land, with all that was low and sordid and degraded!—too like, in short, to deem the part, which Edgar felt already to be the only one he could in honour or in honesty espouse, a base abandonment of his natural position, a shameful departure from the principles and virtues of his race, a crime not to be atoned for, even by exclusion from his heart, and expulsion from the home of his fathers! And had he been able even heretofore, and at a distance, to close his eyes against this fatal

certainty, he must indeed have been both blind and deaf of heart, had he not marked the words of blasting sarcasm—of fierce and fiery hatred, which flashed forth as oft as any casual mention intervened of those who had stood forth to check the headlong declination of the English church toward dreaded popery, or the more rapid increase of prerogative toward absolute and autocratic sway. But they had not escaped him! although unnoted, or at least unremarked, amid the free

of Edgar Ardenne, determined as he was to follow that which he himself should deem the wise, the upright, and the honourable way of action; though such should be avenged by the prostration of all his fancy's idols—by the ruin of his fortune—by the blighting of his nearest and dearest aspirations—and, more intolerable far than all beside, by the forfeiture of that high opinion which his merit had induced, and the frustration of that just expectance which his promise had excited in the bosom of his friends and kinsmen.

Nor was this all!—For, as he pondered now in the lone stillness of the night, as he reviewed with a dispassionate keen-sighted judgment the occurrences of the past day—as he recurred to every word which had fallen from the lips to which he looked for love and life and every thing —to every expression which had wreathed in smiles, or clouded with disapprobation the soul-

fraught lineaments of Sibyl, he could not bless himself with the conviction, scarce even with the hope, that she was not, although in a less stern degree, the holder of the same ancestral prejudices—a worshipper of the same creed, hallowed as it was by much that naturally would call forth the sympathies of a mind imbued with all the poetry of feudal recollections, not as yet faded from the earth—by the high chivalrous devotion—the noble and unselfish confidence—

his heart burning with the pure and hallowed flame of liberty, his head clearly appreciating the miserable and abhorred aims of the rash man who wore the crown of England, his whole soul glowing with patriotic ardour, he must either prostitute his energies to make what to him seemed the worse appear the better cause—must either lift his voice to justify and to defend time-honoured wrong and new-devised oppression—must either edge the weapon of the despot with all the powers of his arm—or, following the dictates of his own conscience, ranking himself among the vindicators of the constitution to its early purity, among the assertors of a legitimate and tempered freedom—as far removed from the wild anarchy and licence of falsely-styled republics, as from the forced obedience and intolerant rule of arbitrary governors—must be content to sacrifice all that his heart held worthy its acceptance? If, in short,

he must act a part dishonest and unworthy, so to gain those ordinary means of happiness, to which none so lowly but they do aspire; or must surrender every hope, nay every possibility of earthly bliss at the inflexible commands of duty and honour.

These were the dark reflections into which the mind of Ardenne had relapsed, as he stood alone, gazing from the lattice of his chamber into the bosom of the night, profiting by, if

the more he pondered, the less able did he seem to find the slightest clue to guide his footsteps through the gloomy labyrinth of the future—the longer he sat gazing on the pallid stars, the less he felt disposed for slumber; till at length, the spirit moving as it were too rapidly, and the blood coursing through his veins too fiercely to permit the body to remain inactive, he arose, scarce conscious that he did so, and paced the oaken floor backward and forward, with swift irregular steps, the livelong night.

Gradually the coming of the early twilight dappled the darkness of the eastern sky; a bird or two, of those which had securely roosted under the ivy-curtained eaves, awaking with a lively chirp, gave notice of the dawn; and anon the calm and colourless light of an autumnal morning crept into Ardenne's chamber, dispelling from its every nook, the massy

shadows which had nestled, like unholy spirits, in those deep recesses beneath the partial influence of the moon. But all unnoted by its occupant had those successive changes circled the firmament; and when the sound of voices and of footsteps, passing to and fro the corridors, announced the return of those bright hours allotted to so much of human toil and sorrow, he absolutely started in surprise, and almost doubted whether it could indeed be

hearers to that most unrestrained and sociable of meetings, the morning meal, he descended the old staircase—gazing upon its walls decked with time-honoured banners and glittering with starry groups of weapons, and its landing-places guarded by complete panoplies of steel standing erect with advanced arms and lowered visors, as if still tenanted by the strong frames that had supported them of yore amid the din of battle—if not with a heart at ease, at least with a countenance that bore no traces of the conflict still at work within.

On entering the summer-parlour, as such rooms were termed in the quaint language of the time, wherein meet preparations for a breakfast far more solid than are used in these degenerate days had been already made, he found his destined bride alone in a projecting oriel window, seated on the broad-cushioned ottoman which circled the recess, with a light

frame before her, filled with a gorgeous Indian silk, on which her art had traced some fair embroideries yet incomplete; but though the many-coloured skeins assorted within reach, and the well-filled needle between her taper fingers showed that she had commenced her feminine and graceful occupation, the thoughtful attitude of her head languidly propped on her left hand, while the right lay motionless on the rich texture, belied her fancied industry.

unlike that with which the painters of the Romish school are wont to hallow their female saints and martyrs. The outlines of her beautiful shape were mellowed, as it were, and shrouded partially by the hazy beams of sunshine which fell in oblique lines between the observer's eye and her person, simply arrayed in a close bodice, accurately fitted to her fine bust, and a full robe of white. Her luxuriant tresses folded plainly about the contour of her small and classic head, without ornament or gem of any kind; and the exceeding repose, if it might not be termed melancholy, of her features, giving, together with the accidents of light and shade, a Madonna-like and sainted aspect to her figure, which would have enchained an artist with no less of fascination than it exercised, from different reasons, over the mind of Ardenne.

As he approached, her delicate ear detected

him; she turned her head, and springing to her feet, "Dear Edgar!" she exclaimed, her eye discovering with instinctive quickness the trace of melancholy left upon his lineaments, however faintly, by his nightly musings, "you are ill at ease.—Nay, smile not—'tis a ghastly smile, not of your own expression!—you are ill at ease,—have you passed a sleepless night?"

"Sweet Sibyl," he replied, with a wan smile, and gently pressing her extended hand, "you

tain. The happy do not so pass their first night beneath the roof that saw their birth."

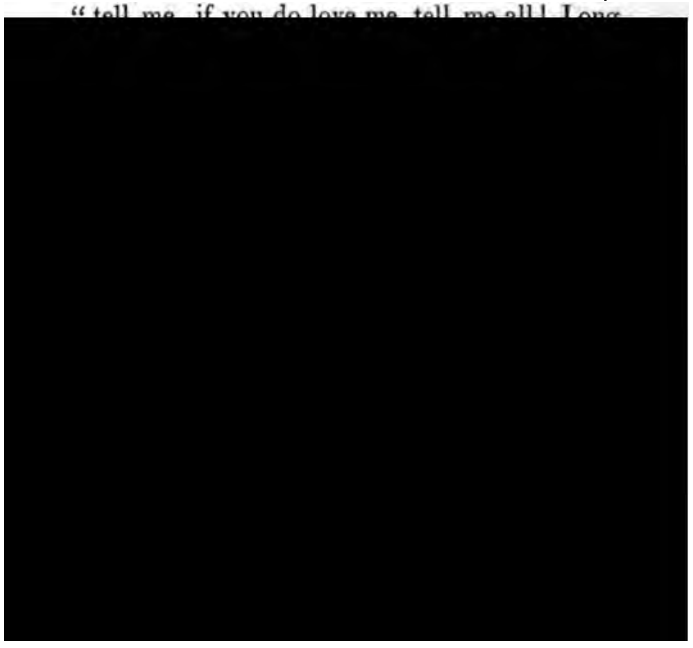
"*If* I do love, Sibyl,—*if!*"—he exclaimed, with deep almost reproachful energy—"But, in good truth, I am a poor dissembler, and could scarcely feign, were it to win even thy heart, Sibyl—and, for it seems I must confess me, I am somewhat, though slightly, ill at ease—"

"I knew—I knew it, at a glance," she interrupted him; "and wherefore then conceal it? Good Doctor Masters, though somewhat past his prime, still ministers, and skilfully, to his familiar patients—an hour will have him here"—and she moved hastily toward a silver hand-bell, which stood, with books and drawings and a lady's lute, upon a fairy-looking cabinet of tortoiseshell and marquetry.

"Nay! nay!" he cried, gently arresting her,—"I meant not so! Be not alarmed,

dear Sibyl, mine is a robust frame, not oft or easily affected by aught of feebleness or ailment. My mind hath been of late somewhat o'erwrought—but a few days consumed in the enjoyment of home, happiness, and the delights of your society, shall speedily restore me. Look not so grave—so sad—I do beseech you—"

"Oh, Edgar," she interrupted him again,



"All—all," he answered, in the hollow voice of one who struggles vainly with his feelings, forcing a smile as faint as a December's sunbeam. "You shall share all—grief—happiness—life—death—eternity! All, all, sweet Sibyl, if that indeed you be so minded! From you I have had—I will have, no secrets;—but now, I do assure you, I am not in grief,—how should I? Something of gloomy thought may have come over me—something of moody sadness—causeless and senseless—such as will float at times across the brains of all, who think—as I do deeply. But no, Sibyl, no, I am not unhappy! Not for the proudest station upon earth would I exchange this fond proximity to thee—not for the universal blast of the world's approbation would I barter that bright tear—shed for me, Sibyl—or that yet brighter tear, that chases it. Cheer up, my own, own, love, we will

talk more of this anon—for lo! here comes my father!"

And as he spoke, attired in hunter's garb of green, booted to the mid-thigh, with bugle-horn and wood-knife usurping the place of rapier and of poniard, and with two gallant stag-hounds at his heel, the noble veteran entered.

"Alert—alert!" he cried, with a gay smile

Outrams, boy, your college mates of yore, and now right noble gallants; and Atherstone, of Ashstead Hall, and old Lord Middleton, with his brave sons! Friends all—true friends, though some of them, I doubt, forgotten! But 'fore George we will make a day of it!"

Thus the old man ran on, overlooking in his light-hearted cheerfulness the evident abstraction of his listeners, although they rallied up enough of animation to maintain some sort of conversation during their hasty meal, which scarce was ended ere Sir Henry started from his seat.

"See! see!" he cried, as a fair cavalcade swept past the windows, their plumes waving in the light west wind, spurs jingling, and steeds curvetting. "See! they be here even now; and lo! the pack!" As, with their attendant huntsmen, and half a score of prickers, splendidly mounted on blood-horses, and

attired in forest jerkins sumptuously laced, round caps, and huge French-horns encircling their shoulders, restrained by many an echoing shout, and many a clanging lash, some twenty couple of tall northern bloodhounds came trotting slowly up the lawn, in all that perfect condition and accuracy of detail, which has, in every period of her history, been so distinctive of the field-sports of England!

one door, as his fair niece vanished at the other. "What ho!" addressing the laughing group, who waited his arrival. "Here have ye an old friend, whom some of ye perchance have not as yet forgotten."

And with a prouder air, and more exulting smile, he introduced his gallant son, unseen for many a year, to his admiring friends.

A short half-hour flitted pleasantly away in heartfelt greetings, and gay converse, of light moment, but lively, joyous, and sincere. Then every high-plumed hat was doffed, and every voice was lowered, as Sibyl Ardenne, with her attendant maidens, meetly equipped for the field, entered the hall.

"To horse! to horse!" was now the word; and the ladies were assisted to their velvet selles by favoured cavaliers, and the gallants vaulted to their saddles, and threw their chargers on their haunches by dint of curb and spur, and

drew their forms to the most graceful attitude, as with courtly merriment and sylvan music, they swept away through shadowy avenues and over shaven lawns, to the wilder coppices and more secluded glades of chase and forest.

CHAPTER V.

The chase is o'er—go couple up the pack,
And let your lusty horn ring holyday
To the swinked foresters—we'll hunt no more,
Since duty calls of gravest import stern,
And deep election—of high causes twain
Which is the better!

THE hunt was at its height! The noble stag—which had been harboured, on the previous night, in a deep swampy thicket, situate at the extreme western verge of the chase, and adjoining a wild tract of semi-cultivated moorland—disdaining to seek refuge in the recesses of the devious

woodland, had broken covert gallantly, as the first crash of deep-mouthed music burst from his stanch pursuers, and clearing by a gigantic effort the rough park-palings had taken to the open country, crossing hill and dale in a line scarce less direct than the crow's flight, and at a pace that, ere an hour had passed, reduced the number of those who followed the now mute and panting hounds from a score or two of

and his gray hair floating on the current of air created by his own swift motion, as cap in hand he cheered the laggards of the pack with a voice that had lost nothing of its full-toned roundness.

At length, in a sequestered dell clothed on each hand with a dense growth of underwood feathering its rocky and precipitous declivities, down which a sandy road wound in short toilsome curves, and watered by a bright and brawling rivulet, hard-pressed and weary the brave quarry turned to bay. The deep note of the leading hound changed to a shrill and savage treble as he viewed his prey, and at the same instant the loud death-halloo rang from the exulting lips of the old baronet, as he caught and comprehended the import of that sharp yell.

Another minute brought him to the brink of a wide pool, embayed between rough cliffs of

sandstone, and overlooked by a gnarled and leafless oak, on the highest branch of which a solitary raven sat unmoved by the fierce clamour, and expecting with a sullen croak its share of the after-carnage. In the farther corner of this basin, clear as the virgin crystal in its ordinary state, but turbid now and lashed to foam by the conflict of the animals, the stag had turned on his pursuers—nor had he turned in

the big tears—tokens of anguish in its expression wellnigh human—rolled down his hairy cheeks, did the noble animal exhibit ought of craven terror at the approach of his inveterate pursuers; but, as the veteran advanced upon him, with the glittering wood-knife bared and ready, leaving the dogs as if beneath his notice, he dashed with a bold spring against his human persecutor, eye, hoof, and horn, in perfect concert of quick movement.

The slightest tremor in the huntsman's nerves, the most trifling slip or stumble, might have well proved fatal; but, although seventy winters had shed their snows upon his head, his muscles had been indurated so by constant exercise in his beloved field-sports, that many a younger arm had failed in rivalling their powerful though unelastic firmness. When the despairing deer made his last effort, eluding by a rapid turn his

formidable front, Sir Henry struck a full blow as he passed, completely severing the tendons of the hinder leg. Hamstrung and crippled, the gallant brute plunged headlong forward, and received in the next instant the keen point in his gullet.

One short gurgling bleat, and two or three convulsive struggles of the agile limbs, the full eye glazed, and in a moment all the fiery energy,

the absent,—the praises of some favourite horse, or daring rider,—the stingless raillery,—the honest unfeigned laughter!

"Who hath seen Ardenne? What chance hath hindered Edgar?" suddenly inquired one of the younger of the party.

"Edgar not here!" exclaimed his father, for the first time discovering his absence. "Edgar not here! 'Fore George! but he must bide the jest for this!"

"'Tis strange, Sir Henry—passing strange, though!" interposed an old gray-headed forester. "None here can match the master's horsemanship; and that brown mare hath the pace in her and the bottom too. Pray Heaven he be not hurt!"

"I fear he may—I fear he may be hurt," exclaimed another. "He was beside me just before we crossed the northern road. I marked him charge the Hartley bourn right gallantly, and

noticed the mare's stride—nigh thirty feet, I warrant it."

In a moment or two the wonder had increased until it might be called anxiety—excitement—the more so, as at intervals the laggards of the chase came straggling in, with mud-stained garb and jaded horses; yet none brought tidings of the absent cavalier.

At length, sounding their horns from time

him, and on the receiving of some packet or despatches, he knew not which, had ridden slowly homeward in deep converse with the bearer.

"St. George! and with a puritan!" cried one of the young Outrams, a harebrained, light-hearted cavalier—"A rascally, starved, round-head!"

"He must be strangely altered then, I trow," muttered the aged huntsman—who, perhaps, had taught him when a boy to ride so well—"an he be gone home with a musty beggar; the hounds running breast-high, too, over the vale of Bardsey!

"Tush! tell me not; he is too true an Ardenne," cried his father almost angrily, "that he should e'er consort with base and brutal fanatics—Heaven's curse upon them!"

The report of the fallen rider was nevertheless true in its most minute particular of circum-

stance; for, as he leaped the fence into the road, and pulled upon his rein, to spare his horse's feet on the rough pavement, a strange-looking man—gaunt, grim, and tall, with an affected air of sanctified austerity on his pinched features, wearing his coarse and foxy hair shorn close to the skin, and clipped into small peaks alike unseemly and ridiculous, with a tall steeple-crowned hat, and a sad-coloured doublet, threadbare and travel-worn, presenting altogether an appearance

o'ertake and stop him, an your business may not tarry !"

"Nay, friend," returned the other; "my call is not with the old, vain-minded, carnal, cavalier; but with his son—a godly youth, men say—honest, and sanctified! yea, one of the elect."

"A truce to thine impertinence, sir knave !" Edgar replied, in a quick angry tone,—"a truce to thine impertinence, an thou wouldst not receive its wages; nor deem thy fulsome flattery toward myself shall anywise excuse thy ribald scoffing at my father! Begone, sir—tempt me, an you be wise,-no further!"

He had already touched his mare with the spur, in order to regain his place beside the hounds, which had gained on him some two fields' width during the interruption, when the puritan reined his hackney short across his path, crying out in a voice somewhat dimi-

nished of its self-importance, "Nay! no offence; for if thou be'est the man, 'twere worth thy while to tarry—I am the bearer of a letter! yea! of two letters, for the good youth, Edgar Ardenne—I pray thee to relieve me of the charge."

"Begone, sir! To your duty!" again vociferated Ardenne, in a tone yet sterner than he had used before. "Begone to Woodleigh, and await my leisure. When I return, 'twill

"Milton! ha!" answered Ardenne, who had already moved to some considerable distance before he caught the name,—"Milton! why said'st not so before—perverse and insolent? Dally with me no further, thou wert best but give at once thy missives, and follow me direct to Woodleigh!"

Ere he had finished speaking, he received the packets—the one a large and cumbrous parcel, wrapped in a skin of thick discoloured parchment, and fastened by a triple band of flaxen thread with a huge seal stamped with armorial bearings charged on a broad municipal escutcheon—the other a small neatly folded letter of smooth white vellum, secured by a skein of delicate sleeve-silk and drop of wax impressed with a superb antique—the stern and rigid features of the elder Cato.

The former of these packets was addressed, with cramped mercantile penmanship, to "Ed-

gar—son of the worshipful Sir Henry Ardenne, knight banneret, and baronet, of Woodleigh, nigh to Stamford, in the good Shire of Rutland; with haste and diligence—post haste!" The latter was directed in a beautiful but bold and manly hand, "To the noble youth Edgar Ardenne." This was the first he opened, and a pleasing smile played over his fine features as he perused the well-turned periods of his already celebrated friend.

you have so profited by cultivating high pursuits of literature, and conversations of the learned—to turn the complete *vis* and vigour of your intellect toward the miserable strait in which our native land lies struggling—

Ut clausus Gyaræ scopulis parvâque Scripho—

A strait so fearful, that she wellnigh has lost not only the fruition present and temporal of her liberties, both civil and religious, but the very hope of their redemption. And yet most earnestly do I rejoice, that you are called so suddenly, and with so honourable circumstance, to take your place in that high council of the nation, for which your genius and your talents so excellently do befit you. I would not wish you in so much to ponder on the character and principles of them that have united in this tribute to your worth, if they

should be in aught—although good patriots and true—distasteful to your feelings, as on the mighty services you well may be an instrument to render, and on the duty paramount which should enforce you so to render them, in that most glorious and free assemblage on which hangs every hope of England. But with respect to this, without attending my injunctions, you have an admirable monitor,

lier had opened, and applied himself to read the familiar letter of his trusty fellow-traveller, gave way, long ere he had concluded, to manifest and restless eagerness; and if he read it through, before he tore asunder the fastenings of the larger packet, it was rather that he hoped within itself to find a clue whereby to solve its mystery, than that he was indifferent to learn what was the nature of the call, to which his friend alluded. But, when he closed it, still in ignorance of that which it behoved him most to know, his colour went and came, and his heart beat quick, as he turned hastily to the sole remaining source of information.

The paper that first caught Edgar's eye, on opening the packet, was a fair document in large clear characters, engrossed on vellum, and purporting to be an invitation from the freeholders of the good town of Huntingdon to Edgar Ardenne, that he would present him-

self a candidate to fill the seat, as member for their borough, in the most worshipful the Commons House of Parliament, lately made vacant by the untimely death of their regretted and right trusty delegate, Elias Chaloner. The second was a brief explanatory statement, signed by the mayor and several of the leading burghers of the town, assuring him that all he had to do in order to secure election, was to

sufficiently assured, the letter stated, of the integrity, the wisdom, and the constancy of him on whom their choice had fallen—so well assured, that they were perfectly content, without condition specified or question asked, to place their interests, their hopes, their fortunes, and, if need were, their lives, at his disposal.

In mute astonishment, Edgar read successively these several documents; and still, the more he read, the more his wonder and his doubts increased. That he, who had been absent from the land of his fathers almost from the day on which he first wrote man—that he, unstamped by any public act or private declaration—uncommitted to any party or opinion—nay, undecided, for aught that the world knew, in his own mind, as to which cause he should espouse in the approaching contest, foreseen by him, as by all men endowed with ordinary

prescience of events,—that he should be thus summoned, within two weeks of his arrival in his native country, and that without a pledge, to fill a place the most conspicuous to which a private individual can well aspire,—that he should be thus eminently trusted, and by men whose very names were strangers to his ears; whose town he had never even entered, save as a passing traveller; whose principles, but from

and the more so at a period when political intrigue and treachery were rife, beyond all precedent, among the men reputed as the leaders in the councils of the nation.

That such a call was flattering, and that in a degree not trivial or accustomed, could not be doubted or denied; but while he felt that sweetest, most ennobling of sensations, the conviction that his character was understood, and his worth appreciated by his fellow-citizens, mingled with a high consciousness that his eloquence, his learning, and experience, might indeed minister not smally to the welfare of his country, Ardenne was yet perplexed, anxious, and doubtful.

Nor did it seem that he was destined easily, or by any effort of his own, to extricate himself from this uncertainty; for when, after musing long and vainly on the import of the letters, he turned for information to the messenger, that

worthy, doubtless resenting with all the rancour of a petty mind the merited rebuke of Edgar, wrapped himself up in such a veil of real or pretended dulness, as defied every species of cross-examination applied to wring from his fanatic obstinacy the reluctant truth. "He had been sent," he said, "a hired messenger to carry certain missives, not to expound enigmas, nor to illuminate the darkness of those whom it might be Jehovah had for their sins

carnal lore of the idolatrous and God-defying heathen, but in the pure and sanctifying wisdom of the gospel. Of its politics he knew not any thing, nor cared. Some cavaliers there were—debosht rakehelly profligates—such as the Knight of Hinchinbrook, uncle of worthy Master Cromwell, now sitting in the Commons' House, for the right saintly town of Cambridge, —and others, not a few. But of a truth the citizens, craftsmen, and artisans, ay, and the mayor and council, were pious and God-fearing men, seeking the Lord alway, day and night, in prayer and meditation. For the rest, if it were so that they had summoned Master Ardenne to be their deputy in parliament, verily theirs was the power to do so; ay, and they knew right well the wherefore! They were not men, he trowed, to leap i' the dark and to repent at leisure. If Master Ardenne thought it good to suit himself to this promotion, his, as

was very fitting, would be the honour and advancement: if not, the men of Huntingdon would be at little trouble to elect as good, if not an abler statesman, to represent their voices.

In this unsatisfied and dubious state of mind, Edgar, with his uncourtly comrade, arrived at the park-gates, and quickening his pace, rode hastily along the noble avenue of elms to the main entrance, flung his rein to a groom, and consigning his companion to the attentions of

ever been an ardent votary of liberty, in its most liberal and extended sense,—a dreamer of those bright Utopian visions concerning perfect commonwealths and absolute equality of men, which, in whatever age or country, never have been, never can be, realized—a modeller of constitutions, excellent in contemplation, but untested by experience; or, if tested by the self-styled republics, but real aristocracies, of early Rome, or earlier Greece, proved only to be fickle, changeful, and unstable, Ardenne well knew, and often with delighted ears had listened, and with mind that yielded to the enthralling grandeur of those theoretic dreamings, while it perceived their fallacy, to the deep-souled and burning eloquence with which he loved to advocate his wild but splendid projects. He had, moreover, heard that subsequently to his return from Italy, the sage enthusiast had devoted himself with stern and

self-denying application, to the maintenance of the most rigid puritanic forms of protestant morality and doctrines against the laxer customs of the church of England, at that time assimilating itself daily more and more, through the bigoted obstinacy of its reckless monarch, and of that most dangerous of all his counsellors, the haughty and half-papish Laud, to the detested ritual and creed of Rome.

easily give credence to the fancy that Milton only—for to him alone, of all those patriots with whom his spirit sympathized so warmly in their devoted struggles in behalf of England's constitution, was he personally or intimately known—should have possessed the power to procure him that untrammelled offer of a seat, which individuals of far greater eminence might have been proud to occupy.

Amid these painful meditations, too, there ran a mingled strain of deeper, because more personal, disquietude—an agonizing apprehension, amounting almost to a certainty, that a seat in parliament, entailing on him as it necessarily must, the highest of all moral obligations—binding him, with fetters stronger a hundred-fold than the poetic adamant, to the upholding of that cause which his mature unbiassed judgment should deem right—must

set him on the instant in direct unnatural opposition to his father, and, yet worse, must sever him from her whose love he surely prized above all mortal blessings.

It was in vain that he attempted to shake off the leaden weight of this dark apprehension—it was to no purpose, that hope whispered to his bosom, how all might yet be well—it was to no purpose that he strove to reconcile the

juster sense returned, and the torn sheet was in an instant shrivelling amid the logs that cracked on the hearthstone.

"No, no!" he cried aloud, in the low husky tones, which tell so fearfully of inward agony,—"no, no—my country,—never will I betray thee at thine utmost need!—What though my heart be broken in the strife—what though I lose all things that make this earth a paradise and not a hell—what though I perish—or, yet worse, live homeless, friendless, fatherless, deserted—hated by whom I most adore, and cursed by whom I bless—that though *I, I*—one man and for one little life, must bear all anguish that a life can compass,—shall I for this shrink back, knowing that England needs the voice, the hand, the soul, of every son she has, to save her from destruction, to redeem her living millions—her millions yet unborn—from countless

centuries of servitude and sorrow!—The cup —the cup is filled!—God grant me strength to drain it—ay to the very dregs!"

And with a calm unfaltering hand he drew a brief but full acceptance of the trust so proffered to his choice; pledging himself to act, so long as he should represent their voices, so, and so only, as his own heart should dictate. "I would," he wrote, "before investing my-

innovation; and the religion which I will maintain is the religion of my fathers—the reformed church of England, equally aloof from the debasing superstitions of the Romish creed, and from the stern fanaticism of Lutheran or Calvinistic sectaries. If then, on knowing these my tenets, both of church and state, ye make it your election still to go forward in this matter, I shall so labour, with such powers both of mind and body as God in his good wisdom hath assigned me, as I may deem the fittest to secure unto ourselves, and unto our posterity for ever, the blessings of a government at once liberal and firm—of a religion, pure no less than tolerant and free. If, on the other hand, ye doubt in aught my motives, or disapprove my principles as stated heretofore—if ye do look that I should yield at any time, or under any circumstance, my own conviction to the opinion or the prejudice

of others—even of yourselves, my own constituents—then make at once a fresh selection of a man more suited to your purposes; accepting in meanwhile my high consideration of the honour ye have done me in thus summoning me, as yet a stranger, to the highest station of your trust."

Scarcely had he concluded his epistle ere a quick heavy footstep, sounding through the cor-

this morning left us in the vale of Bardsey! 'Fore George, but he ran gallantly and straight, poor dapple!—turned him to bay in the witch hollow beneath Leader-hill—gored brindled Mortimer to the death, ere I came up with him, and hurt some six or eight of the others. What in the fiend's name called you home?—What clouds your face, even now, so darkly?—Speak, Edgar: hast ill tidings?"

"Not ill, sir, not ill tidings—but of weighty import," answered Ardenne, as his father threw himself upon a massive settle in the chimney-corner—"and such as have urged on me much grave thought ere I might answer them!" and, as he spoke, he tendered to his hand the invitation from the burgh of Huntingdon. "Here, if my visage be o'ercast, here shall you find the cause—and this, when you shall have perused the first, contains my answer."

With deep anxiety did the eye of Edgar

dwell upon the keen intelligent features of the aged man, fitfully lighted up by the uncertain gleams from the piled hearth—for evening had crept on them unperceived, and the sky was growing dark apace—as he read the letters by the firelight. Changes there were indeed upon the broad unwrinkled forehead, chasing each other over it in quick succession—now a deep frown corded the muscles of the brow, but more perhaps from the effects of thought than from

marvel they should dare pollute a gentleman's ear with their accursed puritanic cant. You have refused them, Edgar—indignantly hurled back their most insulting proffer in their teeth! Is it not so?—Now, on your life, say ay!"

"I see it not in this light, sir," Edgar replied respectfully but firmly,—"I see it not at all in this light—nor is there aught, to my poor comprehension, either of cant or insult in this invitation."

"Doubtless you have accepted it—this flattering invitation!" interrupted the old man, with an expression of the most bitter irony—"doubtless you have!"

"I *have* accepted it," calmly returned his son—"I have, indeed, accepted it; nor can I possibly conceive—"

"You have *not*, Edgar Ardenne," his father almost shouted, as he sprang to his feet, spurning the footstool from beneath them to the far-

ther corner of the room,—"you have not *dared* to do so! You! you! an Ardenne—heir to some twenty generations of high-minded, noble, loyal cavaliers—*you* blend yourself with the foul puddle blood of craftsmen, and pinched beggarly mechanics!—*you* band yourself with hypocrites and traitors against your church, your country, and your king!—No, no!—it can *not* be!"

"Indeed! indeed! it could not," replied

I should be so minded, from degrading loyalty, even as the member for this very borough, into most prostrate oriental slavishness—from bartering our reformed religion for Romish superstition! A seat is proffered to me freely—without condition, pledge, or hint of any interference. Nay! the constituents aver that they refer themselves in all things to my judgment—submit themselves to absolute dictation of my individual will. Now, sir, it seems to me—I pray you so far pardon me, as to permit me to speak to the end—it seems to me, if—as I see no cause to deem them such—these men of Huntingdon be fanatics and traitors, there cannot be a better mode of frustrating their ill intentions, than that I, who most assuredly am neither, should accept their offer, and represent their bigoted and treasonable voices by a most tolerant and patriotic vote!"

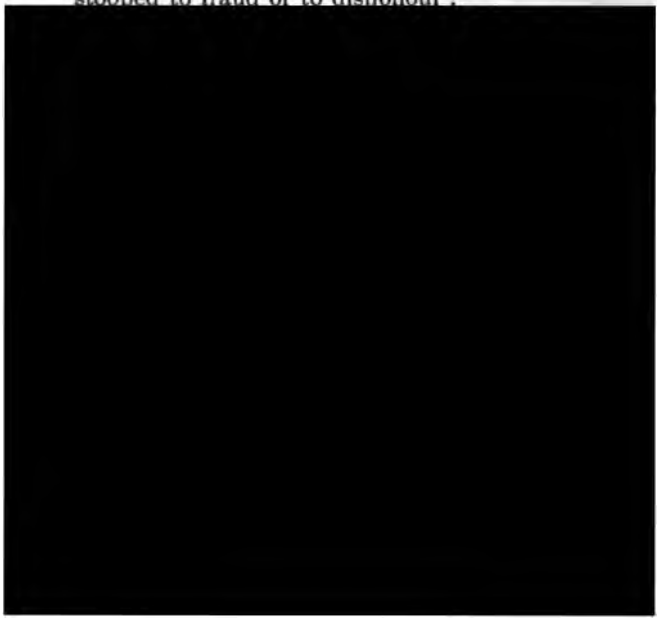
Sir Henry's passions had displayed their pro-

gress on his features, during his son's rejoinder, even more strongly, and with more definite changes than before. At the first every line and feature was inflamed almost to bursting with fierce and fiery indignation—varying as Edgar proceeded to that air of obstinate unwilling coolness with which a man resigns himself to some infliction which he may not avoid. Then, as the truth of what was said impressed itself by slow degrees upon his senses, he listened

when the fool puritans would have you rob the church and manacle the king, vote like a loyal cavalier—now out on me for an old superannuated dolt, that would not hear or comprehend!"

"Nay, sir; but even now," said Edgar, not a little astonished by this ebullition of mistaken pleasure,—"even now you do misapprehend me somewhat. I have accepted this same seat in the Commons, giving the men of Huntingdon to know that I will hold myself responsible to no authority save that of my own conscience. Party, or place, I hold not to, nor covet. In all high honour, and in all accordance with my own sense of just and right, will I vote ever! If these men should dare propose to me, or hint, that I should swerve one hairbreadth from the course of truth and honour, then would I surely disobey them, spit at them, and spurn them. But, if they shall prove honest, as surely will I

compromise no tittle of their interests or their opinions; and so far am I from suspecting aught of this, that I do well believe that my constituents shall prove right honest men and true; else, under favour be it spoken, I deem it most unlikely they should have fixed their choice on me—a man, perhaps not altogether void of some repute and honour; and, if unknown myself, at least a scion of a family that has not ever stooped to fraud or to dishonour!"



sordid puritanic knaves who do oppose them. Not that they know or understand the evil of the measures which they rail at, but that they would embarrass, and annoy, and if their means were mated to their will, perchance o'erturn the government from which those measures emanate; not that they love their country, but that they hate their king; because, being base themselves, they loathe the very name of what is high or generous, or noble; because having nought to lose, even in England's ruin, they may gain all in the midst of uproar and confusion. But enough said! you shall receive their offer since so you will it, although I hold a promise of a borough from my Lord of Middleton, awaiting your acceptance; for which—I speak it in all candour—I would far rather have you member, than for this beggarly psalm-singing body-corporate of Huntingdon. But enough said! Bear with me, Edgar, for I am old and

choleric withal, and hasty! And now to supper! For John cook will be foaming an his goose-pie be burned, or his beef boiled to rags, as with o'erflowing eyes he swore to me they were last night, and all through fault of mine!"

CHAPTER VI.

'Tis hard to part,
When youthful hearts with treasured dreams are high
Of sunny days, and calmest nights serene,—
A happy future!—but oh, harder far,
When dark anticipation veils the scene
With melancholy clouds, and hard at hand
Sits chill despair—that vulture of the soul—
Watching the latest gleam of hope expire,
To pounce her conscious prey.

TIME journeyed onward, and with a flight as rapid, when every day and hour was charged with tidings of some great event, with some terrific rumour, or some perilous forboding, as if

it had ebbed noiselessly away in peace and in obscurity. The golden days of Autumn had already flown—the last slow wain had dragged its freight to the piled thrashing-floor—the last flower had shed its petals scentless and colourless upon the frosted grass. The leaves that had for many weeks clothed grove and forest in a rich garb of many-coloured splendour, now detached themselves one by one from the

was wellnigh maddened by its fears, the other by the excitement of its own fierce and stormy passions. To-day a rumour was abroad of mighty armaments levied beyond the sea, and even now preparing to pollute with foreign weapons the free soil of England, and to erect the power of her monarch, already stretched beyond all limits of constitutional sway, into absolute and self-controlling tyranny. On the next, a tale was rife that Pym, the champion of the people's cause, and king of their affections, had been assailed, perhaps even murdered, by the hired emissaries of a sovereign, stern and cold by nature, and rendered merciless and cruel by the extremity of terror.

Then came the one great accusation, swallowing up in its atrocity all lesser charges, all inferior crimes, as the sunshine drinks up and blots from heaven the fainter lustre of the stars! The one great accusation at that time generally

credited by men of every class, except, perhaps, a few of the most confiding and most generous cavaliers, and since those days confirmed almost beyond the possibility of doubt,—that the Irish rebellion, with all its horrible features of midnight massacre, and midday conflagration, was the premeditated, coolly-calculated work of Charles and Henrietta;—the one great accusation, penetrating every breast, in every rank of

were even more unsettled than in the world at large; parties ran daily higher, and with a greater share of virulence and private animosity than at any previous period; and indeed it seemed that the king himself was labouring as earnestly to the advantage of his enemies, the puritans, as they themselves could wish. At the first meeting of the parliament, a committee had been appointed to draw up a general remonstrance of the state of the kingdom, and the particular grievances it had sustained; which after its first nomination had, however, scarcely ever met, and was almost forgotten.

But now, during the causeless and protracted absence of the ill-fated monarch in the sister kingdom—irritated by his apathy with regard to bleeding Ireland—appreciating fully his dishonest motives, in lingering at a distance from his parliament—and goaded almost to madness by his attempt to seize or to assassinate, as many

did in truth believe, Argyle and Hamilton—the party came to the resolve of reproducing that momentous question, and in accordance with their views, upon Strode's motion, it was carried that "the committee of remonstrance be revived, and ordered without more delay to meet;" and time and place incontinently were appointed.

Within a few days of this measure, a bill of

bishops from the exercise of voting in the upper house, or of any temporal office throughout the kingdom.

Just at this critical and anxious juncture, with his accustomed rashness and inveterate obstinacy, Charles deemed it fitting to collate five preachers of undoubted eminence and learning, but known as well for principles of state the most obnoxious as for their talents, to as many sees vacant by death or by translation; doing this in absolute defiance, as it seemed, to the desires of the popular branch of legislation, and contrary to the advice of his most trustworthy and valuable councillors.

In the midst of the tumults—for to an extent which scarcely can be designated by a less forcible word was the violent struggle carried between the upper and the lower houses—consequent upon this doubtful measure, tidings arrived in London, that on a day appointed

having arranged all matters in that kingdom to the general satisfaction, His Majesty intended to depart from Scotland on his homeward progress; and straightways the committee offered the report of their proceedings, together with a draught of the remonstrance, to the House; which instantly, although divided much in sentiment, and, as many thought, in general opposed to this decisive stroke, proceeded to

been made for his departure; chambers secured for him in Westminster; his retinue and horses sent before him; nay, even a day fixed, whereon again to leave, after so brief enjoyment of its serene and tranquil pleasures, his paternal home. He felt not, it is true, that terrible sensation of passionate and overwhelming sorrow, which drowns the hearts of the young at their first setting forth into the wide and cheerless world, from the dear roof that saw their birth!—much less that sullen and collected bitterness with which the exile gazes, ere he turn from them for ever, upon the scenes never before so beautiful or so beloved! But he did feel a heavy and continual gloom clouding, he knew not wherefore, all his anticipations of the future—an ominous and all-engrossing sense of coming evil—a prophetic fear, that it would ne'er be his again to cast away the burden of his sorrows, and be, as it were, once again a

child in spirit, beside that old domestic hearth —a fear not justified, perhaps, by any clear perception, nor founded upon any evidence of judgment; but yet oppressing his mind, no less than the influence of a coming thunder-storm is often seen to agitate the lower grades of animal creation when not a speck of cloud is visible as yet above the clear horizon.

As far, indeed, as regarded any real or well-

"Never betray your counsel! and in good sooth, thou hast a perilous part to play, and a politic—best vote a few times with the canting knaves—so better to throw dust in their eyes, that they discover not thy game ere it be fit time to disclose it; husbanding so thy powers as to aid our gracious master in his real straits, an it should come—which God avert—to such an issue!"

For a time, indeed, so utterly abhorrent was the smallest shadow of deception to his ingenuous mind and rigid sense of honour—he strenuously and sincerely strove to make Sir Henry comprehend his principles—his entire devotion to the laws and constitution of his country as established by the precedent of ages, not as interpreted by the corrupt and pensioned lawyers of the court—his firm attachment to the privilege of parliament as opposed to the prerogative of the crown—and, over all,

his absolute disgust at the late proceedings taken by the King, and in relation to the claim of ship-money especially, and to the infringement of the anti-catholic statutes. But finding all endeavours vain to overturn his preconceived opinion, he abandoned altogether the ungracious task, in an uncertain state of mind, bordering at one moment upon hope, at another on its opposite extreme, despair; arguing within

perhaps more probable imaginations, foreseeing that the obstinate determination of the sovereign to dispense with parliaments, to recognise the laws of the land but so far as they should further his own imperious wishes—to rule, in short, as an absolute and arbitrary monarch—and the noble stand assumed by the delegates of the people in defence of the people's rights, would by no means be ever composed or reconciled, except by arbitration of the sword; and further, that in such a case, as certainly as he should be himself found warring in the ranks of freedom, so surely would Sir Henry arm to buckler the time-hallowed names of church and king, although the former should be almost Romish, and the latter utterly despotic.

Thus was the mind of Edgar balanced, during the interval which elapsed between his first acceptance of the proffered honour and his departure for the metropolis—its moods as

various as the changes of an April day; now bright with sunshiny and azure skies, now blackened with the scudding rack, and howling with the stormy gusts.

The days, however, wore onward: the chase in the morning, with its heart-stirring sounds and high associations, or the stroll through the highly-cultivated grounds about the homestead, or the familiar visit to the independent yeomen

pleasantly than with loud minstrelsy and the gay dance.

The days, however, wore onward, and although none else perceived the constant cloud that dwelt on Edgar's brow, Sibyl had marked and understood it; and, as if in sympathy, her own transparent skin showed less and less the healthful hues of her elastic blood; and her deep eye was always dimmer than its wont, and often tearful, as it would dwell unnoticed on the overshadowed features of her lover, now constantly absorbed, as he had rarely been of yore, in fits of meditation, abstracting him entirely from the business or the pleasure of the moment.

After the morning following Edgar's return to Woodleigh, although on other topics there had been no reserve, however trivial, no hesitancy or concealment of action, thought, or motive, neither had again alluded to the subject of

their interrupted conversation; he shunning it, not merely because he *could have* nought agreeable, but because he *had* nought definite, which to communicate, and therefore was unwilling, needlessly perhaps, to cloud her prospects with certainly a distant, and, not improbably, a causeless terror; and she not pressing it, because, relying with a pure and holy confidence upon her promised husband—a confidence inferior only to her trust in her Creator!—because

heart possesses in divining and discovering any thing which may affect it in its own particular province, she fancied herself ere long to be the mistress of the causes of his hidden grief; she saw the struggle in his heart between his love for her and for his father, and his devotion to his country. She knew that in the breast of such a man the struggle could last but for a single hour ere it must be decided. She suffered no diminution of her self-respect, no fretting of her vanity, as she acknowledged that her own claims to his affection must surely yield to the overruling *amor patriæ;* and, while she sorrowed with the deep sincerity of a true and loving heart, over the election which she was assured he had already made, she yet thought she hardly could desire that he had decided otherwise.

There was even yet another cause!—a lingering hope that she might yet have been in error

—that she might falsely have interpreted the outward workings of his mind—a fear of banishing that lingering hope, by questioning of that which she most yearned to know—a dread of learning that, which even now almost knowing true, she would have given worlds to know unreal.

The last morning broke, and the last sun arose, which was to shine upon Edgar, a dweller in his father's house. It was a clear,

short, just such a morning as would make the careless and unburdened heart sit lighter on its throne—as would impel the mounted traveller to give his horse the spur, and let his spirits loose by a free and fearless gallop—as would swell the pedestrian's chest, and plant his stride more firmly on the sod, and perchance unclose his lips with something of a song; but it was such an one withal, as would cause one departing from some loved and lovely scene to need a stronger effort to tear himself away, than he would have been called on to exert, had the skies been lowering, and the day in nearer unison with his own sad sensations. Accordingly, the tone of Edgar's feelings was unusually depressed, even as the aspect of all visible things was fairer than the promise of the season; his mien was careworn, and at times it scarcely would have been too strong a term to call it haggard; his gait was various and irregular,

hasty at times and hurried, and at times unusually slow; his eye was often fixed on vacancy, and those who would address him were compelled to speak their wishes more than once, ere they appeared to reach his understanding.

The earlier hours were consumed in preparations, till high noon came round, and he sat down to the last meal he was for many a month to taste in fellowship with those who sat beside him; while the unwelcome thought would still

head upon his hand, as if in anxious thought, and although once or twice he raised it, and made as if about to speak, he yet seemed at a loss for words. At length, as if made with something of an effort, he aroused himself, filled up his goblet from the stoup of Bourdeaux wine before him, and pushing it toward his son, motioned that he should follow the example—gazed for a moment wistfully upon the clouded features that met his eye, and with a nod and smile that vainly struggled to be lightsome, emptied his wine-cup.

"Come, Edgar, come!" he said, "this gloom will never do! Cheer up, kind heart, cheer up! Thou takest on more sadly now, methinks, than when we left us for thy three years' turn of service in the Low Countries! But I can see how sits the wind—old though I be, and past these toys this many a winter's day;—I mind when I was a young cavalier, and not—although I say it

who should not—the most unlikely in the court of good Queen Bess (we ne'er shall look upon her like again),—I mind how I was wont to droop at parting from poor Alice! Sibyl, though passing fair, is nought for beauty, to what she was! Well—too well—do I mind it!"

Ardenne, who had shaken off his air of abstraction for a moment as his father drank to him, was again relapsing into the same listless mood on perceiving that his words were rather

Your cousin Sibyl, I know right well, has long possessed your love, and as long too returned it. That I have in all things approved of this I need not tell you now, seeing that you must well perceive that knowing this, and not prohibiting, was to all needful ends consenting. That you should be cast down at leaving of so sweet a girl as Sibyl, is—I gainsay it not—right natural; nathless I cannot but imagine that you do apprehend some greater evil than a mere temporary separation. Now, boy, to the point! You would espouse your cousin Sibyl—she says not nay!—and if my interference be a cause of dread to you, I say but this, that you have cruelly misjudged your father's heart! My benison on you both! I know no sweeter balm for all the manifold griefs of age, than to make, and to see, the youthful happy. So set your soul at ease, brave boy, you shall wed Sibyl when you will; and the more quickly—the more

gladly and more surely shall I witness it. You start for Westminster to-night; and I have meditated somewhat often now of late on passing this next Christmas-tide in London. Sibyl, poor child, hath seen nought of court gaiety nor of the world as yet, and this is but a lonesome place in winter,—the more so now that half the gentles of the land will, as it seems too likely, be detained all winter in the city by these

to thee, and what beside seems fitting to your melancholy mood. Thou needst not me, I trow, to woo her. Fix, if you may prevail on her, your bridal day at once—whene'er ye list 'twixt Christmas-tide and Easter. Be happy, Edgar, be happy, and let me see you so.—Such is my only wish this side eternity,—before I go to my long home."

"My good—my generous—my gracious father!" cried Ardenne, affected to weeping, as he threw himself upon the old man's neck. "Too good! too generous!"

"Tush! tush, boy!—none of this!" exclaimed the veteran, humming away the husky weakness from his throat, "none of this! but away with you to Sibyl—she is a more fitting object for these raptures, than an old weather-beaten trunk like me. Away with you! But hark ye—here is the ring that plighted my departed angel. Let me behold it on *her* hand, whom I have

loved the best—nay, I might say, the only one of women, since my own Alice left me to drag out my pilgrimage alone without one hope to cheer it save that of meeting her once more, when it shall be, O Lord, thy merciful and blessed will!"

So bent was the old knight on his benevolent design—it would have been of no avail, even had Edgar been so minded, to strive to alter or oppose his projects. They were not such

hand in hand! Once wedded, and no difference of opinion then may put those asunder, whom God has joined together!"

Such were the thoughts that thronged with irresistible impetuosity, and with the speed of light, upon his busy brain; but he had not made six steps beyond the threshold before reflection changed the prospect.—Would it be noble—honourable—upright," thus did he commune with himself—"would it be worthy of an Ardenne—the supporter of an unblotted fame of generations,—nay, rather, would it not be sordid—base—dishonest and degrading to the lowliest gentleman, to win a credulous confiding woman by a fraud—by an implied, if not a spoken, lie? To let her wed, believing him she wedded a supporter of the cause she deemed most holy, a soldier armed for the warfare which alone she looked upon as just and sacred;—to let her wed in haste, and then find out at leisure that she

had been deceived—deceived by whom—by him she had just sworn to *honour*? Not so!" he cried aloud—"It shall not be, by Heaven! She shall know all—every thing! Knowing she shall accept my hand—or knowing cast me off, but not, at least, despise me!"

As his mind arrived at its mature though swift conclusion, he reached the door of Sibyl's oriel parlour—with a hesitating hand he struck the panel, and so slight was the sound

ment of feminine and hopeless grief! Her face was buried in her hands, as she lay stretched at length on the broad pillowed settle which encircled the bay-window. Her light brown hair, which had broke loose from the confinement of her silken head-gear, flowed in redundant waves over the voluptuous outline of her shoulders, trailing down even to the ground. Her features were, of course, concealed; but the large pearly tears, forcing their way one by one between her fingers, had already left a visible trace of moisture on the damask cushions, while the convulsive starts that agitated her entire frame told even more the depth and anguish of her sorrow, than all her weeping.

"Sibyl," he whispered, stealing with noiseless steps over the three-piled Persian carpet till he was close beside her, "my own—own Sibyl!"—there was a deep fond pathos in his

musical accents, which no description could express—a liquid melancholy tenderness that sunk directly to the heart.—"My own—own Sibyl!" and with the most respectful delicacy he lifted her from her recumbent attitude—"and weeping too for me!—but weep no longer, dearest one—I come—I come!—Oh grant it, God! that it may be so—to wipe those tears away—to make thee mine—for ever!"

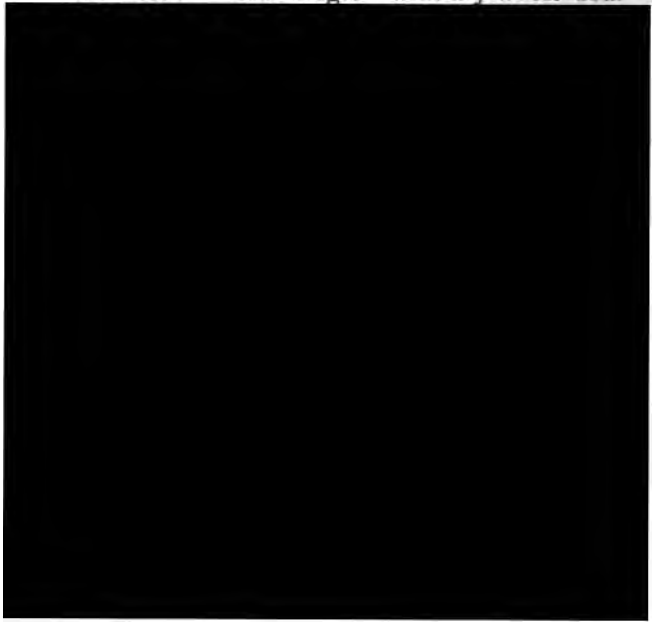
She gazed upon him for a second's space,

and with considerate expressions of calm fondness recalled her gradually to her self-possession; suppressing every sentiment that might embarrass her returning consciousness, that might in any wise offend or agitate her girlish sensibilities; holding her hand in his the while, but with a quiet unimpassioned pressure, liker to the expression of a kind brother's love than to the rapturous devotion of a youthful suitor; soothing her with the gentlest tones of his familiar voice, till she was at the least sufficiently composed to listen to his self-restrained and self-accusing pleadings.

"Sibyl," he said at length, as her deeply-drawn sighs subsided, and her tears ceased to flow in such unnatural profusion—"dear cousin, soon—soon, I trust, to be addressed by a far dearer title, I have much—much that I would say to you before I go from hence, never unless

at your permission to return!—much from my father—for myself yet more!—Dry your tears, dearest, dry them I beseech you—it is agony to me to look on them!—Dry them, and listen to me, that we may, if it be Heaven's pleasure, be happy as the happiest of earth's inhabitants!"

"Say on"—she difficultly faltered forth the words—"dear Edgar—with my whole soul



unwitnessed by us twain together. You will go forth then, dearest—will you not, Sibyl ?"

A smile exquisitely sweet glancing from out her tears was her sole token of assent, as she disengaged herself half blushingly from his supporting arms, and gathering her dishevelled tresses folded them simply, but in the most perfect taste, around her classically moulded temples.

"Wait for me in the vestibule," she said, "I will be there, ere you shall have the time to miss me!" and she vanished from the room, leaving a stronger hope in Ardenne's breast than he had entertained many a day. He was assured in his own mind, beyond the possibility of doubt, that she had marked the secret conflict of his soul, that she had penetrated his sole mystery, and was aware already of his apprehensions as to the part which it might ere long be his duty to sustain, whether it should lie in the grave or

subtle forum, or in the lamentable field of civil strife; and he now listened to the flattering voice within, which whispered that it might well be, a maiden so affectionate, so warm, and, above all, so deeply and devotedly attached, would overlook the difference in their political creeds, as counterbalanced, rendered nugatory and a thing of nought, by their entire harmony of soul on every other subject. It might well be that one

to look upon came gliding down the staircase, wrapped in her walking robe, fitted above the waist with accurate precision to the model of her unrivalled shape, but full below and flowing, of dark velvet furred at the cape and cuffs with the most costly minever; and wearing on her head a cap of ermine, its silken crown and lining protruding from above the border of deep fur, and hanging gracefully down, with a white ostrich feather drooping over it, so as to flush one delicate cheek more warmly than its sister with a tint borrowed from its own bright crimson. With a passionate and fitful light, far different from the calmness of their wonted radiance, the eyes of Edgar dwelt upon the finely-modelled person and the features, not the less exquisitely fair that they now wore a melancholy downcast aspect, of her on whose acceptance or denial of his present suit his all of hope was fearfully suspended. So long, in-

deed, and evident was that fixed gaze of admiration, and so much was she pained by its expression, that the bashful blood rushed like a torrent to brow, cheek, and neck, with blushes scarcely natural, so vivid was their hectic colour.

Perceiving instantly the cause of her confusion, with an air of deep humility he lowered his offending eyes, and as he took her hand to

or dulness!—they for the last time wandered forth into the pleasant solitudes of the broad sylvan chase.

Throughout the greater part of its extent, this ornamented tract, although diversified enough by change of dale and upland to redeem its beauties from the charge of tameness or monotony, was rather of a level than a broken character; its charms were chiefly of that tranquil and composing cast which is found rather in expanses of deep meadow-land, carpeted by a sward so fresh and so luxuriant as to lose little of its verdure even in the dead months of the winter—in the massive foliage of the scattered clumps or more continuous groves of stately timber trees, and in the sheets of limpid but unrippled water, than in the features of a scenery, which if more romantic is far less alluring, if more enchanting to the first astonished glance, bears not so well the test of daily and familiar observation.

Towards its northern and north-western boundaries, however, the ground was swelling and uneven; the hills heaved up more boldly from the valleys, which were in places so abrupt and narrow as almost to deserve the name of glens or dingles; and often wore a coronet of gray and rifted sandstone above the purple heather that clothed their flanks with a dark purple mantle wheresoever the soil was too poor or too shallow

waters shone black as polished jet even beneath the azure skies of summer. Narrow, however, as it was, it yet could boast its islets—two, fringed from the water's edge with tangled underwood above which waved three or four tall trees —the third, a bold and barren rock whereon some feudal ancestor had perched his solitary fastness, dismantled now and roofless. On every side but one the hills sank steeply down to the lake's brink, leaving no space for the adventurous foot of man, feathered with coppice springing from every rift or crevice of their rocky sides—but on that one a turfy glade sloped gently to the marge, where it was bordered by a stripe of silver sand which formed a bright and snowy frame to the dark mirror it enclosed. Just where the turf and sand united a single and gigantic oak, known as the 'Friar's tree' for miles around, reared its short massive trunk, garnished with limbs as tortuous and forked as

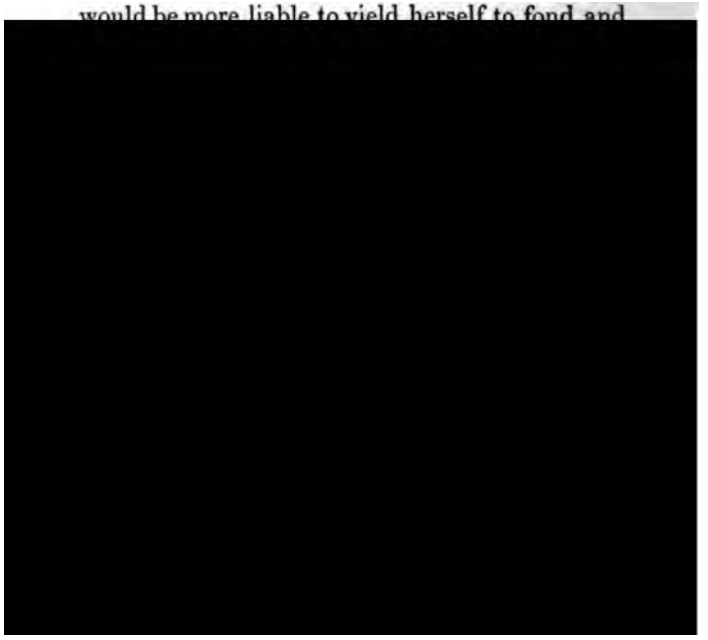
the antlers of the wild herds that loved to rub their budding horns against it in the early springtide, but supporting, even in the flush of summer, only a spare and scanty garland of green leaves, which rustled now all sere and yellow in the melancholy breath of autumn.

Immediately beneath the shadow of this forest-patriarch, and partly overlapped by the encroachment of its twisted roots, lay a huge block of deep-red freestone, bearing the marks of rude

been a monument designed to celebrate some great or wonderful achievement—but whatsoever was its pristine use or destination, it afforded now a pleasant seat, cushioned with soft luxurious mosses, and sheltered equally from summer heat or wintry gales by the huge stem and gnarled boughs that overhung it.

A lovely and romantic spot this was—so still, so lonely, so sequestered from the eye by intervening thickets, that, although situate at scarce a bowshot from the most frequented walks, it yet was rarely visited but by some passing forester or some true lover of the undecorated face of nature. For this cause, perhaps, it had ever been a favourite haunt of Sibyl, who, when a fairy maiden of fifteen, was wont to resort thither with book, lute, or pencil, as the fancy of the moment prompted, and for no other reason had it been the usual termination of her young wooer's wanderings.

What was the aim of Edgar in choosing this fair solitude to be the scene of that most sacred audience which he had come forth to demand, he could not have, perhaps, himself explained. It might be he had formed some half-confessed and indistinct idea, that here, in the familiar trysting-place—the home of such sweet recollections, the shrine of such innumerable hopes—she would 'lean to the soft side of the heart'—



few, even the coolest and most stern inquirers, can altogether wean themselves—one of these fancies, which we all at times have felt, that some peculiar spot, or hour, or person, is secretly connected with the clue and crisis of our destiny—is as it were the hinge whereon the portals of our fortune turn, opening to our steps the unknown paths of future good or evil.

Whatever were Edgar's thoughts, however, during their silent progress to the Friar's tree, scarcely had he placed Sibyl on the monumental stone, and stretched himself before her on the dry white sand, ere he poured forth in a voice of so sweet harmony as might have well beguiled the ear and won the heart of the most determined votary of celibate, a tide of language fraught with such eloquence and yet so practical in meaning—so deep in sentiment, and yet so pointed in expression, that few lips, perhaps, but his could have delivered it, without incurring

some reproach of studied insincerity, or awakening some feeling of distrust. He told her of his hopes, his doubts, his terrors—he told her how a cloud, he knew not wherefore, had overshadowed his horizon, chilling as it were the very sources of his most permanent and warm affections;—he told her, how he valued her the most of all things earthly—the most of *all* things save his God, his country, and his honour! How to him her wedded love would

He told her of the violent and ceaseless strife between his passion and his conscience—of his profound devotion to herself, battling and scarcely to be overcome by his more deep devotion to his country's weal.

"It may be," he continued, "that I am but a timorous dreamer — but a trembling visionary, shaking at causeless and unreal terrors, that the trials, which I shudder merely at foreseeing, shall never come to the proof; but this is what I dread—and what, though dreading, I may not, if it come to pass, avoid or shrink from, even to win what were to me a thousand times more dear than life. The miseries of intestine war let loose to devastate our smiling country!—A wild and bloody strife, dividing brother against brother, sire against son, husband—sweet Sibyl—husband against wife!—A strife between a king determined to

be absolute—a people, to be free! If these things come to pass—though my life be barren, and my deathbed deserted—yea! though my heart be broken in the conflict—yet must I be for ever the sworn soldier of my country's freedom. It may, however, be—Heaven grant it so—that I do falsely calculate the signs of coming wrath;—it may moreover be that as I am, so are you a friend to liberty and justice, more than a worshipper of kings! and if so—

may divide us, and for ever—be mine to cheer, to guide, to comfort, and to bless—be mine for weal and wo—for time and for eternity!"

While he had spoken, though her lips quivered often, and parted more than once as if she would have interrupted him—though her colour went and came in brief and fitful flashes—the lovely girl had never once withdrawn her eyes from his pale face, pale with the struggle of contending passions, nor yet relaxed her pressure of his cold damp hand; and as he paused from his deep-souled and eager pleading, she replied at once, though her voice faltered, and the big tears slid down her cheeks.

"It is, then," she said, "as I dreaded; and our young hopes have been but as a morning vision! Oh! Edgar, Edgar! I have thought, I have hoped, I have prayed, that these things might not be; and yet, too—oh! too surely have I known they must!" and she hurried

onward with her speech, as if she feared that she should lack the strength to act up to her resolution. "Men will say," she went on with increasing passion, "and say *truly*—but I care not—that it is unmaidenly in me to speak, in words, how madly, how devotedly, I love you! My hope of hopes has been—you cannot doubt it, Edgar—no, no, you cannot—to know myself your wife; and now my hopes are changed to

would die, Edgar—die,—and leave to us his sole bequest, a father's malison. No, no! I must stay with him, must console the old man in his barren and unfriended sorrows, must soothe his cares and turn aside his anger, lest it wax hotter and more deadly than you, you Edgar, shall be able to endure. Nor is this all. I am a poor weak girl—a frail, confiding creature, of a sex whose duty and whose nature is obedience — obedience to our king, our husband, our God! I argue not!—I hope not, fancy not, that I can change your judgment, founded, as it must be, on firm conviction; nor would I change it if I could: that which in women is nature, virtue, may well in men be cowardice and crime. Your intellect is strong, and wise, and wonderful,—mine, womanish and weak. Nor should I love and venerate you as I do, could you surrender up your wisdom at the bidding of my weakness! Then, as I do

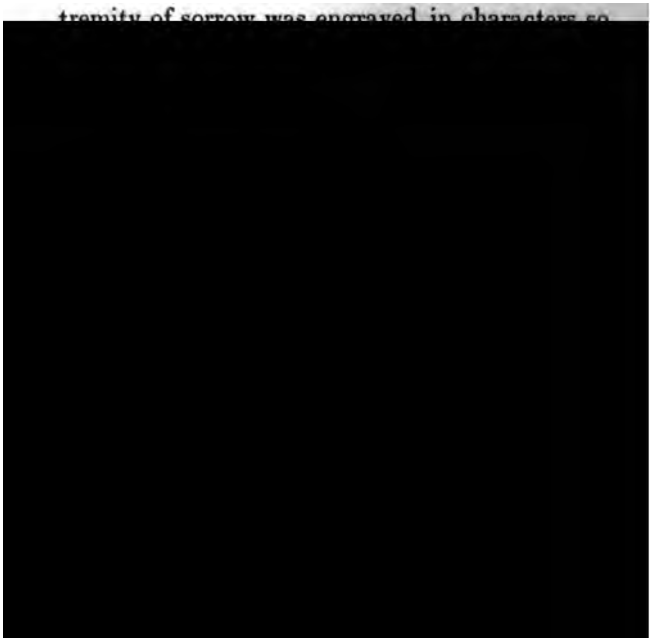
respect your scruples, respect mine also. The sapling bends, indeed, to the wild blast that bows it; but when the hurricane is overpast, it stands no less erect than the proud oak that yielded not an inch to the storm's fury. I in my weakness—you in your strength,—we are alike immovable. Yours I *can* not be now—*may* not be ever!—but of this be certain; wedded or single, royalist or republican, living

heard her out; nor, though he had expected every word she uttered, was the shock less stunning, or the anguish lighter, than if the stroke had fallen on him unaware. Too well, however, did he know, and too entirely respect the principles which doomed him to eternal and unutterable sorrow, to speak one syllable in answer or entreaty.

"One kiss," he murmured through his set teeth; "one last kiss, my own lost Sibyl!" and she fell upon his bosom unresisting, and her white arms were twined about his neck with a convulsive clasp, and their cold lips mingled in a long embrace that had no taste of passion or of pleasure, and their tears flowed together in that gush of unchecked misery.

Before an hour had passed, Ardenne had left the mansion of his fathers. The old knight wondered, and was grieved, but silent; he saw at an eye's glance that his own hopes, his first

born's happiness, had been dashed rudely down; but to imagine wherefore, conjecture was itself at fault. He wept upon his neck, blessed him, and sent him forth! A pale form, indistinctly seen through the fast-gathering twilight, stood in the oriel window as Edgar slowly mounted; but the burst of agonising sobs that followed his departure, was distinctly audible.—Enough! Timanthes veiled the face, on which the ex-



CHAPTER VII.

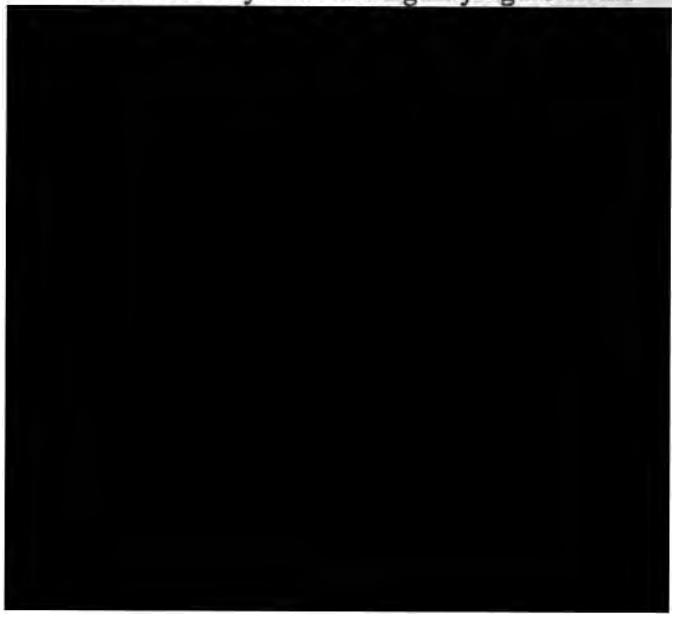
This is true liberty, when freeborn men,
Having to advise the public, may speak free,
Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise;
Who neither can, nor will, may hold his peace;
What can be juster in a state than this?

MILTON, *from Euripides.*

ON a dark and gloomy afternoon, in the latter days of November, Ardenne, having already gone through all the necessary steps preliminary to his entering on his novel duties, and having devoted a few days to renewing ancient intimacies, or forming new relations, with some of the

more leading men of either party, took his way, for the first time, toward the honoured precincts of St. Stephen's, around the walls of which, now, alas! levelled to the ground for ever, the collective eloquence of ages had shed even then a halo of more than mortal glory.

The House had been some time in session, when he entered, and, to his almost irrepressible surprise, in passing to his seat the object that first met his eye was the ungainly figure of the



volved declamations of this worthy; but after a few moments' survey, his notice was attracted by the bent brows and compressed lips of a considerable number—gravely attired and stern-looking men, who sat apart even from those who were completely recognised as favourers of sweeping measures of reform, and ever and anon responded to the sentiments expressed by the speaker with a deep hum or sullen cheer of approbation. He could see too, that Hampden, with whom he had advanced already beyond the earliest steps of friendly intercourse, was not inattentive to the words of this strange-looking personage; although at times a smile would flit across his comely features at some wild undigested thoughts, or strong denunciation fiercely disproportionate to that against which it was levelled.

He had not, however, much space for observation, since the orator, who, it seemed, had

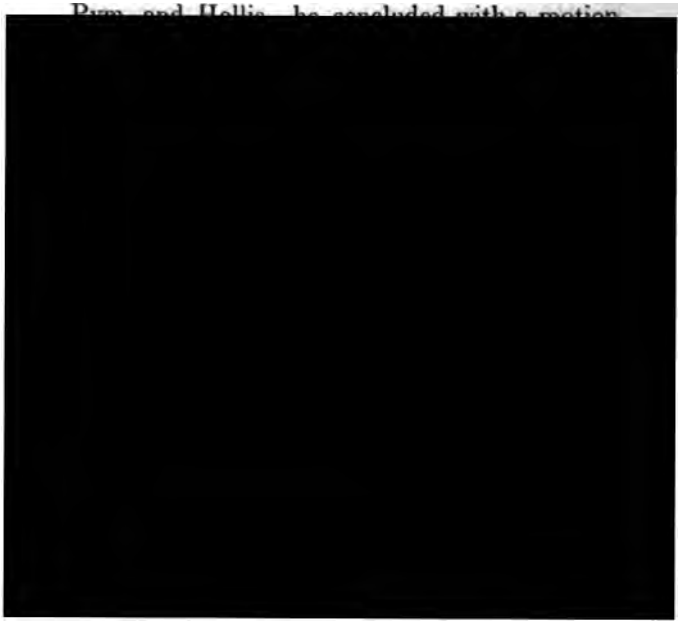
wellnigh finished his harangue ere he came into the assembly, now resumed his seat, and was at once succeeded by a youthful gentleman, whom Edgar recognised for Lucius Carey, Viscount Falkland, of an exterior so prepossessing, that in another man it would have been the principal attraction, though in this instance it was but the goodly shrine of a surpassing soul. His form was slight, but elegantly framed—his

of birth and bearing. His voice, as he began to speak, was sweet and tunable, and although weak at first, increased in energy and power as he proceeded, till Ardenne felt that he had never listened heretofore to any one combining, in so eminent a degree, persuasiveness and strength of language.

From the Lord Falkland's words, Edgar quickly gathered, that the measure under consideration was no other, than the famous and much-contested bill of general remonstrance, which it appeared had been at this late hour brought forward by the opposition party, when the morning had been wasted in minor and unprofitable questions, with the hope of smuggling it, as it were, through the House during the absence of many, its most known opponents. The speech of the young nobleman was luminous, though brief, and touching in no respect on the principles or object of the bill, went clearly and

directly to the point, asserting that it should not, at that irregular and most indecent hour, be forced upon the assembly unprepared at least, if not reluctant to consider it.

Loudly applauded by the moderate party, as well as by the open antagonists of the measure, throughout the whole of his speech, and not less warmly, though more sparingly, at times by its impartial and sincere espousers—Hampden, and



nions—at length, Lenthal, the Speaker of the House, with his clear sonorous voice, enforced obedience to the chair, and quiet was again restored.

Lord Falkland's motion instantly was seconded by Hampden, in a few words, forcibly but simply urging the necessity, that this great question must be freely discussed and openly by all who shall decide to take a part therein. The House was cleared for question, and the adjournment carried with few dissenting voices.

There was but little tarrying within the body of the house, but as they passed into the lobby and down the parliament stairs, men fell into small knots of two or three, discoursing, some on the occurrences of the discussion just concluded, and some on matters of more general and varied interest.

It was at this moment, just as Edgar fell into a group, in which he had observed the figures of

Hyde (in afterdays more celebrated as Lord Clarendon and Chancellor of England), St. John, Lord Digby, Colepepper, and Hampden—all spirits in some sort congenial to each other, all being favourers, ostensibly at least, though differing in mode and measure, of reform both in church and state—that the orator, whom he had judged at the first sight to be Lord Falkland, passed by so closely as almost to brush his person with his cloak, deeply engaged in conversa-

replied the other shortly—"for it would sure take some debate."

"A very sorry one! my lord, if any," answered the puritan, who was already passing out of sight, when Edgar touched the shoulder of John Hampden, whom he had previously addressed.

"I pray you, of your courtesy," he whispered, "Master Hampden, tell me, who is yon slovenly and clownish-looking man in converse with my Lord of Falkland, for I do see he is on your side, by his warm speech to-day."

"That sloven,"* answered Hampden—and in afterdays, when the undaunted breast of him who spake was mouldering in its bloody cerements, not the least noble victim of that

* This very remarkable and prophetic speech was actually uttered by Hampden in reply to the question as given above of Lord Digby; in the first year of the Long Parliament; *i. e.* at a date a little *earlier* than that assigned to it in the text.

lamentable strife, his auditor remembered those prophetic words—"whom you see before you, hath no ornament in his speech. That sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the King, which God forbid! in such a case I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England."

"Indeed!" said Ardenne, thoughtfully—"indeed! I had not thought of him so highly,

leastwise he doth know, and reckons of *you* highly! You will be here to-morrow, Master Ardenne," he continued after a momentary pause, "and with *us*, I trust! If we should lose this bill, it will, I fear me much, go hard with England's liberties."

"Here I shall be, past question," answered Edgar. "I scarce should hold myself an honest man, were I to quit my station in the crisis of the storm; although," he continued with a smile,—"although that station be a new one, and its occupant but strange and inexperienced. Here shall I be, but more you must not ask of me. How I shall vote, or if indeed at all, till I have heard both reasons and objections I may not easily decide. Wherefore, good Master Hampden, if you do care in truth for the assistance of my vote, you were best call to aid that eloquence and depth of reasoning, whereof I hear men bear such testimony; and so convince

me that my country's weal requires it of my hand! Give you good night, fair gentlemen," he added with a courteous motion toward the company. "We meet again to-morrow."

"If you be not in more than common haste," said Hampden, laying a slight detention on his arm, as he turned round to leave the lobby, "I will entreat you tarry, while I speak ten words with my Lord Digby. Your lodging lies, if I mistake not, this side Charing, and

guished men who seemed to give — desirous each, perhaps, of winning to his respective faction a partisan so like to prove of weight, in the equally poised state of parties—that eager and respectful heed to every word he uttered, which cannot fail to please the minds even of those the least accessible to ordinary adulation. With a glance pregnant of meaning, and an admonition strongly urged, although its import could not be distinguished by the bystanders, Hampden turned from Lord Digby, and announced his readiness to walk, flinging his cloak in several folds over his left arm, and bringing round his rapier's hilt to meet his grasp if needed—precautions not uncalled for in those times of fierce and virulent commotion.

As they passed down the stairs the men in waiting recognised their masters, and fell at once into their places; two moving on in front with lighted links or flambeaux, necessary in

those days when the most frequented thoroughfares of the metropolis could boast few lamps but those which graced the residence of some great noble—and two stepping along three paces in the rear, their eyes warily moving to and fro and watching with keen scrutiny the air of every passenger who met or overtook them, and their hands in frequent contact with the pommels of their swords. For, notwithstanding the eulogium passed some years before by a French resident

banded officers and other desperadoes ever to be found about the palace of Whitehall—that few, whose purses could maintain such followers, esteemed it safe to walk the streets by night without their armed attendance, particularly such as were obnoxious to assault, or insult at the least, in consequence of party eminence or of political renown.

At a few steps distance from the House they encountered a stout body of the train-bands, well-equipped with muskets, swords, and bandoleers, forming a portion of the guards, which, on the news of the attempt against Argyle and Hamilton, the Commons had required to be detached for their protection by the Earl of Essex, at that time General-in-chief on this side Trent; and to this it might, perhaps, in some degree be owing that during their walk homeward no circumstance of annoyance or attack occurred, to interrupt the converse of these high-

minded men, who though but newly and imperfectly acquainted, already felt, each for the other, that reverential admiration, which is often the precursor to familiar friendship.

At the door of Ardenne's lodging, with feelings of increased respect and with renewed promises of a meeting on the morrow, they then parted—the one hastening to some nightly conclave, there to deliberate with his associate patriots on measures rife with England's weal—

into slumber, and so powerful the operation of his spirit even while the body was buried in what seemed absolute oblivion, that scarcely had the earliest indications of the wintry twilight crept through the fogs of the near river, ere he awoke, and starting instantly from his bed, began to do his garments on, summoning the while his sluggard followers to prepare his morning meal. But notwithstanding all his haste, so gloomy was the dawning, and so late, at that drear season, the uprising of the sun, that he had scarce the time to snatch a hasty morsel, before his horses were announced to bear him to St. Stephen's; and almost at the selfsame instant two gentlemen to speak with Master Ardenne; and, with the word, John Hampden entered the apartment, accompanied by a person of most "unusual" and forbidding aspect. Austere, fanatical, and gloomy, he might have been pronounced at the first sight

by any person moderately skilful at deciphering men's characters from the expression of their features; his dress would not perhaps entirely bear out the charge (for such, and a most grave one, was it deemed by the wild cavaliers) of puritanism; for, although uniform and rather grave in colour, it yet was cut with attention to the prevailing mode, as well as to the setting off a person infinitely less ungainly than his countenance was harsh and extraordinary. His

younger; whom I beseech you, Master Ardenne, know as such; right soon I trust to stand in similar relation to yourself; but we were both desirous of your company this morning to the House; and I would fain propose that you shall for the present occupy a seat nigh mine. Till you shall be in some degree accustomed to the usages and method of the House, it may be my experience shall in somewhat profit you; and I fear not to make this offer, seeing that, should you find hereafter that your conscience may not justify your being one of us, I shall provide that none may look on you as a defaulter from our party; and I have heard and seen enough, methinks, already of your character and bearing, to know that, even should you differ from us as to the quality or manner, you are not like to be against us as to the needfulness of some reform; so that to be seen companying one so hateful to the courtly

faction as John Hampden shall in no sort prevent you of advancement."

"Most thankfully," said Edgar, after exchanging courtesies with Vane, "do I accept your offer; the rather, that as yet I know not, though I fain would learn, the persons of many among your famous orators; and for the rest, my vote will not, nor my opinion either, be affected anywise by sitting in this place or that.

serious or connected conversation, and but few minutes were consumed in the brief gallop that brought them to the low-browed portal of St. Stephen's. The privates of the civic guard, on duty at the door, presented arms, as if to some high officer, as the patriot leaders passed them; and it was not long ere they were seated altogether in the body of the House, at no great distance from the Speaker's chair.

The galleries were crowded, as it seemed, wellnigh to suffocation, not with the ordinary idlers who resorted thither only to dissipate the tedium of an hour not otherwise employed, but with men whose anxious faces, and limbs that almost trembled with excitement, announced the deep and painful interest they took in the debate, which had commenced already, and with a spirit so unusual at the opening of a measure, as might be held a sure prognostic of the fiery and determined ardour with which

it would be carried on ere it might come to question.

At the moment when they entered, Hollis was on his legs, urging with logical and beautiful precision the absolute necessity of fixing, and on grounds so sure that they should never more be moved, the limits between right constitutional prerogative and absolute despotic power; pointing out the gradual and successive

and eloquent, and wise and loyal; than whom no better subject breathed the breath of life within the girt of the four seas that compass Britain, DIED, miserably died for want of natural refreshment! Whose blood," he added, in loud and pealing tones that woke an echo in the breast of every free-souled man, "whose blood of life, untimely and unrighteously dried up, still cries, cries even from the dungeon walls wherein yet lies the mouldering tenement whence persecution drove the free and fearless spirit—still cries, I say, to every English heart —cries, trumpet-tongued, for vengeance!"

Wildly and fiercely rose the mingled shout, for it was nothing less, of approbation and disgust.

"Eliot!" exclaimed one bolder than the rest, making aloud the application which all had tacitly perceived; "Eliot!—the murdered Eliot!"

Meanwhile, the hall rang with diverse cries of "Treason!" "Vengeance!" "Order!" the latter word prevailing gradually even as the rest subsided, till the orator again obtained a clear field for his manly elocution.

With a lower voice, and less impassioned manner, he proceeded to recount a train of grievances that seemed to defy enumeration:—the new and unfair tax of ship-money—the seas

unoffending Britons! and I say this," he cried, louder and clearer yet,—"I say this, not of an Ottoman divan—not of a Spanish inquisition—but of an English chamber!—of a Star Chamber HERE! Here, in the land of Magna Charta!—here, where the code of Alfred is not as yet forgotten or extinct!—a chamber judging, *not* by law, and trying, *not* by jury!—a chamber, forcing men to yield their substance to be wasted in the raising armies and equiping fleets—for what?—What, but to compel their fellows, their Protestant and pious brethren, to worship HIM who made them, according not to conscience nor to faith, but to the will of painted potsherds!—scarlet iniquities!—hoary and venerable sins!—wolves in sheep's clothing!—faithless and hireling shepherds, hounding the dogs upon the flock, which they should guard and cherish!"

Amid a tumult of applause the popular and

weighty orator resumed his seat; while Hyde uprose—not, as it seemed, to answer, but to palliate, to palter, to procrastinate. For not once did he summon courage to question, or deny, that which no earthly wit or wisdom could disprove. And fiercely as the measure was discussed, it was yet most remarkable that not one of the royal partisans, maintaining, as they did most resolutely, the debate from morning till past midnight, spoke so much as a

audacity to add, beyond all previous precedent in the fair growth of freedom.

All this made forcible impression on the clear mind of Ardenne, as he listened with enthusiastic feelings, it is true, but still with calm discrimination, to the successive bursts—sometimes of eloquence, thrilling, sublime, and almost superhuman in its majesty, sometimes of coarse, fanatical and phrensied ravings—as Glyn and Maynard, Cromwell and Pym, and lastly the unrivalled Hampden, advocated this great measure—equals all, if not in perspicuity of argument, or vividness of torrent elocution, if not in talent or ability, at least in truth and fervour, and in that single-minded earnestness which proved, past doubt, their genuine and deep sincerity. At first he waited with strong interest the rising of some champion who should turn, or at the least dispute, the triumph with the speakers of the liberal party. Then,

as one after one, they took their places at the table, and spoke their speeches, varied in vigour and in brilliance, but monotonous in argument, or rather in the want of it, a sense of disappointment overcame him; and by slow degrees the strong conviction gained, that the cause must be indeed vicious and feeble, for which its most devoted favourers, wise, eloquent, and witty, as confessedly they were, had nothing to

tantly departed, actually worn out by the lassitude that succeeds ever to unnatural excitement; and the arena of the mental gladiators became more open to their virulent contention. And still at each succeeding pause the liberal party seemed to gain in strength—the mighty hum of approbation rose more audibly at every bold and popular sentiment; while the cheers of the diminished royalists now failed to rouse their flagging and disheartened orators.

So wondrous was the prevalent excitement, that it drove even the calm dispassioned blood of Ardenne dancing through all his veins like streams of liquid fire; and he found himself ere long lending his breath to swell the shout of admiration that followed every sentence uttered by the latter speakers. At length the House divided on the passing of the bill; and, howsoever certain the result had seemed, while distant, so thickly mustered the opponents of the mea-

sure, that many an honest heart fluttered in doubt, and many a face of England's noblest sons was dark as midnight with despondency.

During the moment of confusion, which always must occur at such a crisis, a whisper fell upon the ear of Edgar—a low, stern whisper, not addressed to him, nor at that instant comprehended—uttered, as he fancied, in the sneering tones of St. John—"Look now,"

out a momentary doubt, a thought of hesitation, Edgar stepped forth, and sealed the downfall of his private fortunes by the vote which he recorded in the cause of England's liberty. A small majority, of but eleven voices, passed that eventful bill, the loss of which would have exiled hundreds—the best and wisest of the land—driving them forth to seek amid the snow-clad wilds of the New England shore, what they had then despaired of at home, "freedom to worship God."

Scarce had the hearty cheering, which followed this announcement, ended, ere Hampden rose again to move "that there might be an order entered, for the present printing of it:"—and straightway, as if all that had preceded it were but the prelude and slight skirmish which so generally leads to a pitched battle, a debate—if that, which was all animosity and virulence and fury, can be called debate—ensued, which

speedily effaced all recollection of the previous struggle, and had wellnigh steeped the hands of the contending factions in each other's gore.

Hyde started to his feet the first, praying that he might have permission to enter his protest—believing, as he said, such printing of the bill, without concurrence of the Lords, to be alike unprecedented and illegal.

their hilts, as if but waiting for a voice to cry "The sword of the Lord and Gideon," or some other text of warlike or bloodthirsty import, before they should betake them, in their own language, to the carnal weapon.

So critical, indeed, was the conjuncture of affairs, and to such lengths had private pique and public animosity been carried among men all armed, in token of their gentle birth, that writing coolly in his journal, after the heat and passion of the contest had gone by, Sir Philip Warwick has recorded, "that when they voted it, I thought we had all sat in the valley of the shadow of death; for we, like Joab and Abner's young men, had catched at each other's locks, and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels, had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden by a short speech prevented us, and led us to defer our angry debate until next morning."

And so in truth it was; for at two of the clock past midnight, when he saw that nothing could be hoped in the then temper of the House, that wise and upright statesman moved an adjournment until two of the next afternoon, prescribing motives so replete with good sense and good feeling, that none so stubborn as could with any show of right gainsay him.

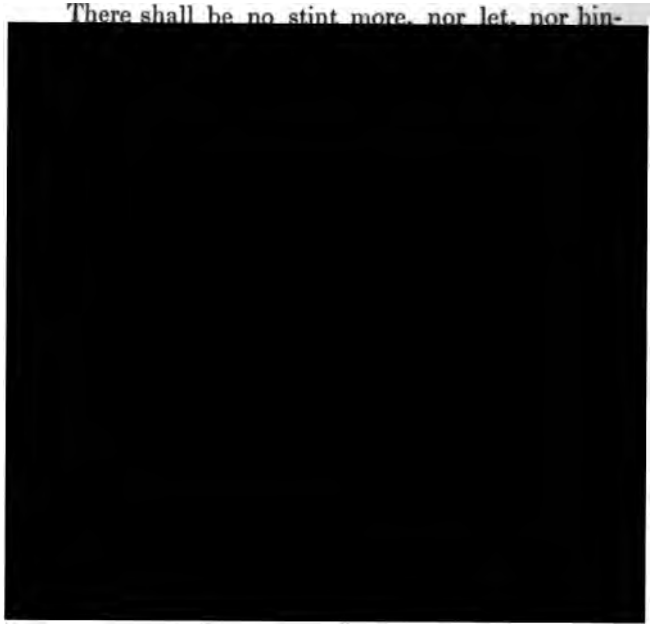
Worn out and wearied, body and mind alike,

for that he was in presence of a spirit mightier than his own. The latter overtook them suddenly, and was passing onward at the first without addressing either till he caught the eye of Cromwell—"Ha!"—he said, with a quiet smile not wholly free from irony—"Ha! Master Cromwell, think you there hath been a debate to-day?"

"Another time," replied the puritan,—"another time, and I will take thy word—but verily, I say to you—verily, as the Lord Jehovah liveth, had this remonstrance been rejected, then had I sold mine all of worldly substance on the morrow—ay! and had taken up my staff, and girt me with my sword upon my thigh, and never had seen England any more!"

"Nor you alone, perchance!" answered the youthful noble, after a moment of reflection, "methinks, I have heard others named for a like resolution!"

"Perchance me no perchance!" cried Oliver, with a triumphant smile—"Had the malignants carried it, I tell you that their victory had robbed old England of her trustiest spirits!—But now, my lord, mark well my words!—and you too, friend—if that you be—as I do partly think you are—and if you be not, and I be in error, then may the Lord enlighten and amend you—a friend to liberty,—mark well my words!—



were it meet that I, the vilest and most worthless of his instruments, should judge whom the Lord listeth to appoint—but verily I say a MAN, who shall bring mighty things to pass in Israel!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Lo! how 'tis ever on the stillest day—

the exception of a short and somewhat turbulent debate, on the day following that of the main question, originating in a wish on the part of the puritanic leaders to punish those who had protested on the previous night, but resulting merely in a penalty of form inflicted on one person—Jeffry Palmer—the Commons seemed to relax in the vigour of their defensive warfare against the crown. The bill for regulation of the militia and prevention of forcible impressment, unless in case of actual invasion, was, it is true, brought forward, but without any of that inveterate and rancorous spirit which had signalized their earlier measures.

The King on his return from Scotland, was received—chiefly in consequence of the exertions of Sir Richard Gourney the Lord Mayor of London, an active and uncompromising loyalist—with loud if not sincere manifestations of welcome and affection; was feasted

at the Guildhall with more than ordinary splendour, and hailed, as he passed to and fro the city, with thundering acclamations by the wavering and worthless populace. A further triumph still awaited him in the address presented at his residence of Hampton Court, by aldermen deputed from the city, requesting him to take up his abode among them, and to hold his court as heretofore in his

fore active members of the reforming party, although moderate and wary, now having taken office openly—the former being Secretary of State in the lieu of Vane, the latter Chancellor of the Exchequer—held nightly conferences at the house of Hyde, for the well and wisely ordering the shaken and disordered principles of government; and would, as it seems probable, have met with eminent success in their beneficent and patriotic measures, had it not been for secret influences and the prevalence of councillors behind the throne, unseen and unsuspected, but exercising—and for ends most imfamous and selfish—a power, to which, unhappily for him and for his kingdom, the mind of Charles, easily led and prone to arbitrary counsels, though obstinate and inaccessible to aught of argument unsuited to his own opinions,—yielded complete obedience.

Such was the state of matters—things gradually looking brighter and more bright for the royal party; and the remonstrant leaders, Hampden especially, becoming not only less violent in their opposition, but beginning to judge more favourably of the King's motives and intent,—when the insane and childish protest of the Bishops was sent forth, instigated by the proud and angry Williams, declaring "all laws, orders, votes, resolutions, and deter-

Bedlam, rather than the Tower, as a fit place for their detention.

Then came reports of plots—rumours of aggressions meditated on the lower House—doubts and despondencies, and wrath and panics! It was believed on all sides that, without confident assurance of support the Bishops had not dared to rush to such extremities. Petitions were poured in from every quarter! one from the city, setting forth that, since their loyal gratulations on His Majesty's return had been misconstrued as though they would disown the doings of the parliament, they now declared their full resolve to live and die with them for the good of the commonwealth.

Addresses multiplied, and were accompanied even to the palace by such crowds, that in a message to the common council the King com-

plained of the tumultuous assemblages daily increasing, to the disturbance of his palace of Whitehall. On the same day the parliament petitioned him, to grant to them a guard commanded by the Earl of Essex—that appointed for their protection during his absence in the north, having been instantly disbanded on his late return—on account of a malignant party now daring openly to threaten them with violence.

[redacted]

would be more like to militate against their liberties, if not their persons, than to defend them from external outrage.

It was upon the very day that followed this insidious offer—for such it must be deemed—that, urged by his worst counsellor, the false and faithless Henrietta, to that most rash and headlong step which rendered his affairs for ever irretrievable, and reconciliation with his subjects hopeless—elated still by his reception in the city, and heedless of the daily proofs of public feeling and opinion, he went on to commit his last and desperate aggression on the privilege of parliament—an aggression which had they tamely borne, his throne would have been fixed for ever on the firm basis of despotic rule, and England would have lain a fettered captive at his tyrannous footstool. It was on the next day, while the protestation that he would be answerable to Almighty God for the

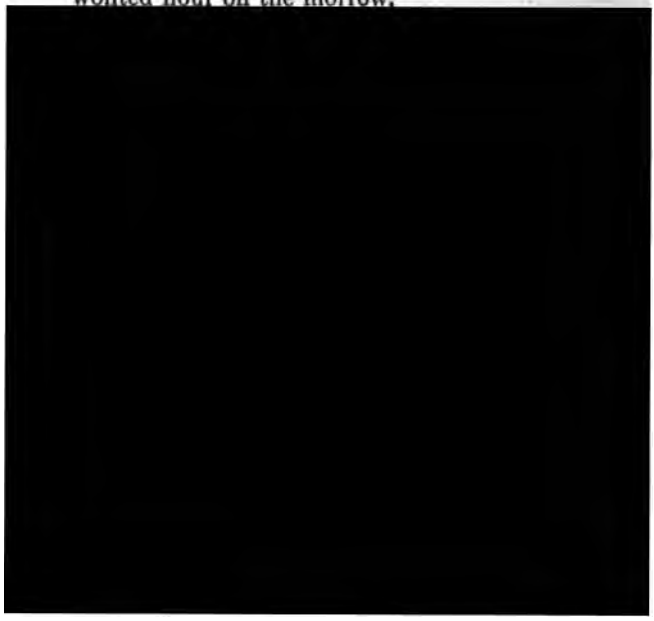
safe-guarding of their liberties and persons was yet fresh upon his lips, that Charles struck that blow at the very existence of parliaments, which, had it fallen as intended, must have destroyed them root and branch. For on the afternoon of that eventful day, Herbert, the King's attorney-general, entered the House of Peers then sitting, and drawing out a paper in the King's own writing, read it aloud, by which the Lord Kimbolton, present there and

there any lord so hardy as to move for his committal on His Majesty's behalf.

Meanwhile, the Commons House was entered by the King's sergeant, demanding that the Speaker should deliver up the bodies of the members named above, to answer to a charge of treason—bearing no warrant or authority from magistrate or counsellor, but acting solely at the King's behest, and without intervention of the law. News came, at the same instant, that the private lodgings of these members had been visited by royal messengers—their trunks and studies sealed up, and their papers violently seized.

With bold and masculine resolve, well-suited to the peril of the crisis, did the House meet this haughty and high-minded insolence. The sergeant, having gone through his message, was desired to avoid the chamber; but word was sent the monarch, by a deputation, assuring him

those members should be instantly forthcoming, so soon as any *legal* charge should be preferred against them; the House declaring, by a powerful vote, those violent acts of seizure breaches of privilege, audacious and illegal!—empowering their members to resist; calling on all men to abet and aid them in resisting such attempts upon their liberties, as free-born Britons; and instantly adjourning for the night, until the wonted hour on the morrow.



group, and seemingly its principal, was one—a lady of low, slender stature, and a shape slightly awry, though by skill of her tirewoman this defect was so disguised, as to be scarce perceptible. Her hands were delicate, and gemmed, as were her ears, her neck, the bosom of her robe, and the rich volumes of her jet black hair, with Indian brilliants. Her features were agreeable and sprightly, yet such as could not properly be praised as regular, or beautiful; a pair of bright black eyes, and a coquettish smile, forming their chief attraction. Her conversation, lively, and perhaps even brilliant, though flippant and unguarded, was listened to by her attendant ladies, and by the only cavalier admitted to the presence—a man of noble bearing, easy yet dignified, and withal in person eminently handsome—with an attention so profound, that it denoted—even without the bended

knee, and the averted back—the speaker to be one of royal rank.

Music and cards were in the chamber, and a most lovely girl, of some seventeen or eighteen years, was dancing to the amatory strains of a concealed musician, in a style which would now be esteemed far too voluptuous, if not absolutely meretricious, to be performed by the chaste limbs of ladies, or looked upon by modest eyes.

While she was talking earnestly to the Lord Digby, now—since the flight of Jermyn, her adulterous paramour—her most beloved and trusty councillor, a short and hasty step was heard without, accompanied by a slight bustle, as if some more distinguished personage had suddenly, and by surprise, come on the unexpectant chamberlains and pages, sole inmates of the antechamber. The door of polished oak flew open, and bearing evident marks of discomposure in his depressed lip and overshadowed brow, a gentleman of graceful presence entered the apartment. Of that time of life, when the rashness and the fire of youth are tempered by the sedateness of increasing years, although the face has lost no trait of its attraction, nor the limbs of their alert and agile motion, Charles Stuart (for the new comer was no other), was of a middle height, but strong and well-proportioned, excepting that his legs were triflingly bowed

outward, a circumstance which, while detracting somewhat from the grace and symmetry of his appearance, was favourable more than otherwise to his accustomed exercise of horsemanship, to which indeed it might have been in some sort owing. His visage, of a just and oval form, was pleasing, although dark-complexioned; his features regular and comely, with a full dark eye, gentle and somewhat dull

for even when he smiled, it was a faint and transient flash, scarce clearing up the gloom of that accustomed sadness, which brooded over his countenance; although his disposition was cheerful more than otherwise, and if not buoyant, certainly neither mournful nor despondent; and which, as fanciful and superstitious men have oftentimes imagined, is ominous of an untimely end. His dress, of plain black velvet, slashed and lined with satin, differed in nothing (save that upon the left side of his cloak glittered the diamond star belonging to the order of the Garter) from the garb of any private gentleman. He wore his hat above his sable hair long-curled and flowing, and in his hand he carried a strong cane, or ferrule, with a crutch-head of gold, which he struck passionately upon the carpet as he entered.

"The undutiful—disloyal varlets!" he exclaimed in tones of strong excitement, "the false,

rebellious knaves! — to deal thus with their sovereign!" and for several moments he paced to and fro the room, regardless of the eager entreaties of his affrighted wife to speak the cause of his distemperature.

"A message!"—he burst forth at length, but in a voice broken and faltering with passion— "To me! to me a message! I tell you, Marie, an they have their will, I may indeed be *called*

"And is it possible," she cried, artful and evil woman that she was, in feigned astonishment and indignation, "that you, my lord,—you, heir to such a line of mighty sovereigns—you, monarch of Great Britain, will be thus braved and thwarted—will be controlled, defied, and trampled on by such a scum of low and scurvy fellows as this parliament?—that you will brook to have your crown robbed of its brightest jewels of prerogative—your sceptre wrested from your hands without one struggle? Would—wretched princess that I am!—oh! would to God, that I had tarried in my own glorious France, or that I had been wedded to a MAN!"

"Madam, go to!"—The King retorted sharply—for, all uxorious as he was, and prone to hold her slightest words as mandates to his will, his temper naturally hasty and impatient, was now unusually aggravated by the commingled

influence of anger and irresolution. "Be silent —and dare not impugn our energy and courage! England and you shall know, and that right speedily, that Charles Stuart brooks neither insolence at home, nor usurpation of his rights abroad! and for these—rash and reckless rogues —they, too, shall learn that I am yet a king!"

"Well said!—well said, my gracious sovereign!" exclaimed Digby, with an exulting

these vile rogues by the ears from out their infamous cabal,—else never look me in the face again!"

"Brave girl!" replied the facile King, rueing already his late burst of anger. "Brave, brave, Marie, and beautiful as brave!"—and, throwing one arm round her waist, he led her to a sofa at the farthest end of the saloon, where, seating himself at her side, he hung with all the manifest and ardent passion of a boy-lover over the wily Delilah, who—prodigal in secret to another than himself of her voluptuous charms—had yet the perfidy, and with it too the power, to woo him, by a scanty and reluctant show of public fondness, to measures, her only interest in which was to bring back a banished lover to her guilty arms, how ruinous soever they might be, she recked not, to her too trusting husband.

CHAPTER IX.

to and fro, in crowds or singly, conversing eagerly with white and panic-stricken visages—women, increasing with their shrill and anxious voices the wild din—and children, long hours past the accustomed time when they should have been sleeping peacefully in their warm chambers, wandering to and fro with looks of frightened and inquiring wonderment cast upward toward the agitated features of their parents. But the necessity of rest will conquer even the quickest and most moving causes of excitement, and ere the stars began to pall in the cold frosty sky, the thoroughfares of the metropolis were quite deserted, as if no turbulence of party strife had ever interrupted their security and silence.

The morning broke in its due season, and the only thing observable in the demeanour of the groups who gradually filled the streets, passing this way or that as men engaged in their ac-

customed avocations—in their pursuits of profit or of pleasure—was an air of general and pervading sternness—not merely gloom, but resolute and dark determination. There was no light or trifling conversation!—no jests! no laughter!—whatever of discourse seemed absolutely needful was couched in brief and pithy sentences, and uttered in a tone not puritanic nor morose, but sad, and at the same time full of energy, grave, and severe, and wellnigh

Meanwhile, in a small chamber of the palace at Whitehall, richly adorned with painted walls and splendid oaken carvings, and overlooking from its lofty casements the streets through which the crowds were flowing toward the parliament, sat Henrietta with a single lady, a page awaiting, near the door of the apartment, the pleasure of his royal mistress. A frame filled with embroidery stood before her, at which it seemed she had but recently been occupied, though now she held a volume of some French romance, from which, however, her eyes glanced so often toward the windows, attracted by the mingled clamours of applause and hatred, rising at times even until they penetrated her reluctant ears, as to denote that little of her mind was given to the wild witty author, who apparently engaged her. Her eyes were full of bright and keen excitement; a hectic flush glowed in a spot of vivid crimson high upon

either cheek, and her hands trembled with a visible and nervous agitation. Her conversation also, if the light and frivolous sentences that fell from her lips at intervals merited such a title, was broken, interrupted, and evidently embarrassed by some internal conflict which she hesitated to disclose.

For a considerable time she struggled to maintain a semblance of composure; but, as the hours passed onward, her trepidation became

Twice or thrice, ere the bells chimed ten, the page in waiting was despatched to learn whether no tidings had arrived from parliament; and each time that he returned the bearer of a negative, a peevish exclamation of disgust escaped her, not unnoticed by the lady who attended on her privacy. At length, peal after peal, the steeples rang forth ten, and then, with an exulting smile, as though she could contain herself no longer—"Rejoice!" she cried in high triumphant tones, "rejoice! my Carlisle—for ere now the King is master in his states—ay! and his enemies are all in custody!"

"His enemies—your grace," exclaimed the patriotic lady, to whom, with indiscretion equalled only by that of the rash doting husband whom she thus betrayed, she had divulged the secret—"his enemies?"

"His enemies, said I?" returned the Queen,

in accents sharper than before—"in truth, then, I spake wrongly! His traitors, rather!—His false, rebellious, and bloodthirsty traitors! By God's help, now his captives—Hampden and Pym and all their rabble rout!"

And as she spoke, sweeping across the room with such a port as would have well beseemed a Britomart striding upon the prostrate necks of Romans, in their turn subdued and humbled, and, entering again the balcony, she cast a

watchfulness of her imperial mistress, had not that royal lady been herself perturbed too deeply to investigate the mood of others. The Countess of Carlisle's features, cast in the purest and the calmest mould of conscious aristocracy, had worn throughout the morning an expression of grave feminine anxiety, and her broad placid eye had followed with a quiet yet observing scrutiny every unwonted movement, every nervous start, and every change of colour that had resulted from the Queen's excitement; nor had she tardily discovered that some dread crisis was at hand—though what that crisis was, not having been a party to the councils of the regal circle on the previous night, she might not even guess. The thoughtless words, however, of the fickle-minded Henrietta had given her at once the clue which her quick apprehension followed, as it were intuitively, through all its labyrinth; and she at

once availed herself of the discovery she had made with a degree of cool and present courage, that, even in that age of prompt and daring action, failed not to wake the admiration which it merited.

Now, however, when the hardening excitement had passed over—when the nerves, which had been strung so tensely to the performance of her duty, were no longer kept in play—when she knew that her trusty messenger was on his

wont; and her blue eye, so tranquil in its usual expression, was slightly anxious.

It was but a little while that her uncertainty continued—for, ere an hour had elapsed, the Queen, whose passions became more and more enkindled with every moment of suspense, sending another messenger to learn whether the Houses were in session still, received for answer, that they had just adjourned until one of the clock, and that the members even now were passing to their lodgings.

"Heavens!" cried Henrietta, almost in despair at this unpleasing and most unexpected news. "Just Heavens! can it be that he hath failed me!" And casting herself down at length upon a couch, she covered her head with a thick veil, and waited in an agonized and speechless fit of mingled hope and terror, the result of her intriguing machinations.

In the mean time the House, which had assem-

bled at the usual hour, not altogether unexpectant of some further outrage on their privileges, had indeed, on receiving the well-timed announcement from the Countess of Carlisle, upon the instant voted an adjournment, that they might better so concert plans of resistance to that lawless violence which they were now too well assured their sovereign had resolved to perpetrate.

It was at this moment when all were hasten-

tion, than could have been supposed from the inferior part which he was wont to play in its ostensible and open movements. He knew not at the time, any more than four-fifths of the House, what were the secret news which had so suddenly produced adjournment; and had indeed himself voted against a measure which he could not comprehend, although the private hints of Oliver and Hampden had not escaped his notice; nor could he now conceive the meaning of the strong excitement which kindled all who listened to the words of Cromwell as it were with an electric spark. Not long, however, was he destined to remain in ignorance, for with his harsh features even more than commonly inflamed and ruddy, the puritan approached him.

"Ha!" he said, in a loud coarse whisper,—"Ha! Master Ardenne—how is this, that you, to whom we confidently looked for succour,

should, in this strait and peril have turned against us, consorting with the men of Belial?"

"I know not, Master Cromwell," Ardenne replied, "to what you do allude; nor have I heard of any strait or peril. I saw indeed that you and Master Hampden were desirous I should vote for this adjournment, but seeing no cause wherefore—nor being, so far as I know it, your follower or pledged supporter, assuredly I

honoured walls—to lay his violent tyrannic hands on those, with whose salt only we are savoured ?"

"What mean you, sir ?—speak out !" cried Ardenne. "Will he indeed do this ? Can he be so infatuated—so insane ?"

"*Will* Charles Stuart dare it ?" said the other, "say, rather, what he will *not* dare, if we the watchers and the guardians sitting on the tower, yea ! on the housetop, to give note of coming wo, blow not the trumpet through the land. Yea ! will he come, and that right shortly —Yea ! will he come, and if our hearts be not the stronger, and our arms too, if need there be—will trample down the liberties of England unto everlasting !"

"Never !" exclaimed Edgar, vehemently moved,—"no, never shall he do so !—never while I—if none beside—have sword to wield and hand with which to wield it."

"Ay! is it so?" returned the other, his whole face blazing out with a triumphant ecstasy. "Is it so? And would you draw the carnal sword if it were needed?"

"Would I," cried Ardenne, "would I unsheath the sword to guard these holy walls from desecration?—would I uplift my arm against the hireling ministers of lawless and despotic violence?—Ay, were those ministers ten thousand sworded angels!"

citizens were admonished to stand upon their guard; and members were sent down to the Temple, and the Inns of court, to warn the students that the House was well aware how they had been already tampered with, and to command they should not come, on any plea, to Westminster.

Ere the time appointed the house was crowded. Edgar was in his place among the first; and as he saw the five obnoxious members calmly resume their seats, as though no peril threatened them, a mingled sentiment of admiration and regret thrilled to his heart, at the idea that if indeed the King, with his wild dissolute attendants, should forcibly attempt to seize them, they surely would resist, and but too probably be slaughtered on the very spot which they had made to ring so often with their proud patriotic eloquence.

As he thus thought, a new impression shot

with the speed of light into his mind—"If they be absent—if they be absent when he comes, the fearful consequences may be, perchance, averted, which otherwise must beyond doubt result from letting loose a band of reckless soldiery to rush in sword-in-hand on gentlemen armed likewise, and almost unanimous to guard their liberties with life."

And on the instant he arose, and in a few words, powerful and manly, moved that the House should grant permission to those members to withdraw themselves, lest tumult, and perhaps even worse than tumult, fall of it.

"I second it," cried Cromwell, starting to his feet. "I second the most honourable member's [redacted] them straight-

mission that they might retire; and at solicitation from their friends they instantly departed.

Scarce had the hurry and confusion consequent on their withdrawal ceased, ere a dull trampling noise was heard without, as of a powerful band of men. The word to halt was given, and for a while the sound was hushed, the members sitting stern and silent in their places, disdaining to show any sign either of wrath or terror. Again the sounds were heard, ascending the great staircase; and now the clink of steel, as broad blades of partisan or halberd clashed together—and now a shout, "Fall on! Fall on!" mixed with the shuffling tramp of feet, the jingling of scabbards, and all the bustle that accompanies a sudden and disordered march. Nearer and nearer came the tumult. The lobby was already filled, to judge from the increasing clatter, with armed intruders; and now the din

of grounded arms rang audibly upon the ears of the undaunted councillors.

Then, for the first time, was a show of passion manifested among the younger gentlemen. A dozen, at the least, impetuously started to their feet, and not a few grasped, with an energy that proved how fearlessly they would have used them, the hilts of the long rapiers which all of gentle birth at that time carried. A single

door—and that the Speaker was commanded to sit still, with the mace lying on the board before him.

Still not one word was spoken—not a whisper—not a breath, nor murmur, through that spacious hall—and every man sat fast, with head unmoved, and eyes fixed sternly straight before him; as if they did not so much as vouchsafe to cast a glance, still less a thought, toward the violator of their rights. Had there been aught of riot or confusion,—had there been aught of armed and passionate resistance—nay had there been any fear, or doubt, or wavering, it then had been an easier task for the misguided King to carry out his frantic and destructive purpose. But hard it is, and most revolting to all human feelings, to outrage and assault where there is neither terror nor resistance.

It was perhaps a minute, after the messenger retired, before aught new disturbed the

silence that prevailed unbroken beneath the vaulted roof—a minute fraught with the thronged sensations of unnumbered years—a minute that seemed longer than a life to every patriot seated there as gravely steadfast, as those senators of early Rome, who waited in their robes of dignity, and on their curule chairs, the moment when the Gallic horde should pour out on their white unshrinking heads the cups of massacre and vengeance.

Then, leaning on the shoulder of the Palsgrave, Charles Stuart advanced! Those who stood nearest to his person might have seen a momentary pause—a brief involuntary hesitation—a reluctance, hardly perhaps acknowledged to himself, to cross what was to be the Rubicon of all his future fortunes. But so short was the pause, so small the effort it required to conquer that reluctance, that it would seem indeed as if, according to the classic proverb, destined already to destruction he were deserted by his sanity of intellect. Perhaps he had expected fear—abject and tame submission—had supposed that he should stride in triumph, unopposed and sued to on the bended knee, through that magnificent assemblage! Perhaps he had expected anger, indignation, and defiance! But now as he looked up those lines of crowded benches, and met no glance of recognition, encountered no full front even of wrath or scorn; but caught alone, row

behind row, those stern and masculine profiles, composed, severe, and passionless — profiles, averted less in resentment than in proud contemptuous sorrow—his wayward spirit for a moment's space recoiled, and he half wished the perilous step untaken.

It was but for the twinkling of an eye, however, that his rash mood of obstinacy failed him; for without a quiver of his nerves, a change of his dark visage, he strode across the threshold, about a pace before his foreign

from within the house, to close it. His right hand rested, as if carelessly, upon the pommel of his war-sword, and his left twirled with a gesture of unbridled insolence, his long mustaches; while many a fierce licentious countenance might be seen glaring from behind him on the conservators of their country's freedom with a wild and wolfish aspect of malignant hatred.

The King himself, attired as usual in a plain garb of sable velvet, wearing no weapon but an ordinary walking-sword, and carrying in his right hand together with his staff, the dark plumed beaver which he had doffed on entering, stalked coolly up the House—the Palsgrave following slowly, and as it seemed with a half timid and reluctant step. Still all was silence! —silence so profound, that, save the heavy footsteps of the monarch, not a sound could be perceived—unless it were when from without

some weapon-clang was heard, or some rude threat or imprecation was muttered in the ante-chamber, by the desperate attendants of a Lansford or a Digby.

The face of Charles, grave and even sorrowful by nature, was something paler than usual; but with that sort of paleness which conveys no thought of cowardice or trembling, but of immovable resolve. His mouth was firmly closed but not compressed, nor showing aught of effort!—His eye, calm, searching, cold,—but keen and hard as iron!—His nostril only of his features gave token of emotion, or of any

As the King advanced along the floor he turned his head from side to side, perusing with deliberate and steady glance, the lineaments of every member whom he passed; and if when at a distance not one eye had sought him, so when he now stood close beside them not one eye avoided him. Each, as Charles came into his line of direct vision, met his hard gaze with an unblenching and unloosing brow; for not one man—even of those the most devoted to his will, of those who *would* have served him at that moment, who afterwards *did* serve him, with their whole hearts and lives—but was disgusted, angered, full of deep sorrow, almost to despair.

Little there was, however, of the stronger and more stormy passions painted upon the brows of those who sat thus fearlessly, braving the temper of a king whose wrath was no less lasting and vindictive, than it was hot and

sudden. The expression that prevailed most largely, was of mingled aspect, half pity, half defiance. But when the tyrant—for that action, if that only, justified the title—approached the seat of Cromwell (who was, perhaps, at that day scarcely known by name to the proud sovereign) and his glance fell upon those grim ungainly features, then Ardenne witnessed—for his eye was still attracted, why he knew not, with a strange sense of fascination toward the

as men ever turn the eye away from objects naturally hateful or unseemly. At that point of time the face of Cromwell was as tranquil, as immovable, as that of his great future rival; but the tranquillity was no less different, than is the stillness of a hushed volcano and the peaceful calm of heaven. The swollen and corded veins upon the temple, the eyebrows lowered and contorted, the balls gleaming beneath them with a fixed and baleful light, the nostril rigidly distended, and the lips pressed so tightly that they alone of his whole aspect were of a livid whiteness.

Ere Edgar had the time to think, had there been any matter yet for thought, the eye of Charles stole back, half timidly as it appeared, toward that tigerlike and glaring face. Then, as it met the sinister and ominous stare of fierce defiance, it brightened also—vivid, and

keen, and with a falconlike and noble splendour.

For some short space they gazed—those two undisciplined and haughty spirits—into each other's very souls—mutually, as it seemed, conscious at a glance of irremediable and desperate hostility. The King's look, quiet, although high and angry, and most unutterably proud—Cromwell's, sarcastic, bitter, furious and determined, and withal so savagely trium-

that, too, gloomily) upon the ground, toward the Speaker's chair.

But the stern democrat, as if conscious that his genius had prevailed, cast his eyes round him with an air of loftier feeling than Edgar had as yet observed him wear. It was a trifle, at the period when it passed; and none but he noticed it; but after-times and after-deeds, stamped it, no more to be erased, upon the tablets of his inmost soul.

Meanwhile the King had reached the chair; and Lenthall, the bold Speaker, who had hitherto sat still, as proud, and far more placid, than his visiter, arose and stepped out stately and cold to meet him. Then the King mounted to his place, stood upon the step but spoke not, nor sat down; and there he stood, gloomily gazing on the House, with a dark look of sullen anger, for many minutes.

At length he spoke. "Gentlemen," he said,

in a high voice, clearly audible to the most distant corner, though neither musical nor pleasing, —"Gentlemen of the Commons, I am sorry for this my cause of coming to you. Yesterday I did send a sergeant, to demand some, who by my order were accused of treason. Instead of prompt obedience, I received—a message!" and he uttered the last word with the most concentrated scorn and insolence. "I must, then, here declare to you, that though no king that

rang again. "Ho! I say, Master Hollis! Master Pym!"

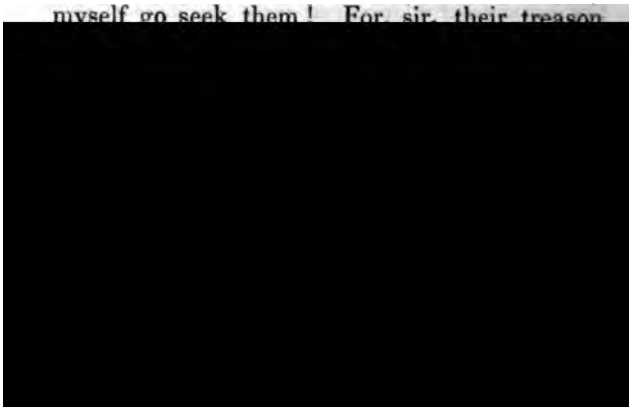
No answer was returned, nor any sound, save an increased and angry tumult in the lobby, with a brandishing of partisans, and a producing of concealed but ready pistols, so that some members thought to see the soldiers instantly rush into the chamber.

After a little pause, finding he got no answer, he turned to the Speaker. "Say," he exclaimed, —"say, Mr. Speaker, be any of these men here present?"

For a moment Lenthall paused, as doubting whether to hurl his own defiance, and that of the assembled Commons, into his very teeth; but ere the echoes of the monarch's voice had ceased, he had resolved upon the wiser and more prudent part, and bending with most deferential courtesy his knee, "I have, sir," he replied, "nor eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this

place, save as this House, whose servant I a— sworn, shall order me. And, therefore, must pray your Majesty to pardon me that I retur— no further answer!"

"Ha! sir," returned Charles sharply, and with incipient fury, but a moment's thought convinced him that the humble answer of the Speaker defied at once, and rendered hopeless, any charge of violence against him. "Ha! sir," again he said, but in a milder tone, "I do believe my eyes are to the full as good as yours, and I do see my birds are flown; but this I tell you, and so look ye to it—I hold this House to send them to me! Failing of which, I shall myself go seek them! For, sir, their treason



He waited not for further words; perchance he doubted what reply he might receive to this last *false* asseveration—palpably, unquestionable false—for wherefore brought he his disbanded soldiery, his rude and ruffian bravoes, with rapier, partisan, and pistol, into the very precincts of the House? Wherefore, unless he had designed to hale the accused members violently forth by the strong arm of tyrannous authority?

Stepping down from the chair, he walked, uncovered still, but at a quicker pace than that with which he entered, toward the lobby; but now as he departed, his looks were not turned haughtily from side to side, but sadly bent upon the floor; nor was his passage silent as before—for member after member started up as Charles went past him, with bent brow and clenched hand; and groans both loud and deep saluted him.

As he came nigh the seat of Cromwell, the King raised his visage, haggard now and pale, as with an anxious curiosity to look upon the man before whose eye he felt himself to have recoiled; and, as he met it, Oliver sprang upon his feet, his long tuck rattling in the scabbard as he rose, and stamping on the floor with fury, shouted aloud, in tones not mild nor measured, the word "Privilege!" A dozen voices took it up, though not so loudly, nor with so marked defiance as the first daring speaker, and the whole House was in the wildest and most uncontrolled confusion.

Delightedly would the despotic prince, had he but dared it, at that moment have cried *word*, expected by his

thanks to Heaven, he dared not! There would have been no object worthy of the risk—no gain to justify the detestation he would have so heaped upon his head! He did not *dare*; and, therefore, smothering for the time his virulent and vengeful fury, he departed — the door swung heavily behind him; and with no muttered curses on the head of him who lacked the spirit to perform what he and they yearned equally to execute, frustrate of their desired vengeance, unsatisfied, and balked, his hireling desperadoes filed out from the venerable walls their presence had so shamefully polluted.

CHAPTER X.

He hath gone forth!
Not with the gorgeous majesty sublime
Of marshall'd hosts—not with the brazen din
Of trumps sonorous—but heartsick, and sad,
Despairing, and dishonour'd! He hath gone—
Gone—that his place shall never know him more—
Cursed of his people—outcast from his throne—
A dim, discrowned king!

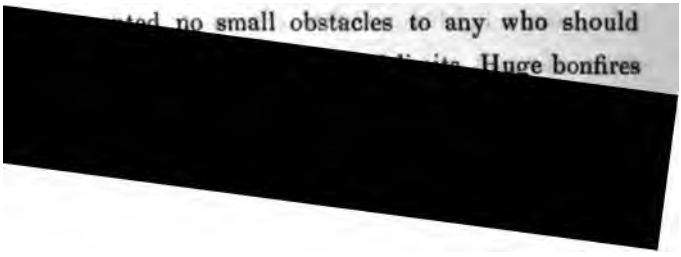
THE night fell, dark and tempestuous withal. The winds wailed mournfully at intervals, at

thunder growled remotely, but with a sullen rolling that seemed almost continuous, such was the length and frequency of the strong peals—and lightnings flashed on every side the heaven, now in broad quivering sheets of ghastly light, that transiently displayed the ragged edges of each fleeting storm-cloud in distinct relief, and now in wavy lines of most intense and life-like fire, rushing athwart the rack from zenith to horizon.

Yet turbulent as the night was over the city, and ominous as showed the gathering of the elements, still more alarming was the turbulence that reigned in the full streets, and more portentous was the concourse of the armed and angry citizens. The train-bands had been mustered in the early evening with arquebuse and pike, their lighted matches gleaming on all sides through the murky darkness, and the heavy trampling of their companies every where audible, as they marched to and fro vainly desirous to allay the tumult which had arisen instantly on the arrival of the accused members

seeking protection in the guarded precincts of the city.

From sunset until dawn the mayor patrolled the streets, with his assistant magistrates, vainly endeavouring to quell the terrified and savage populace, with whom—all armed as chance had ordered it, some with the perfect implements of modern warfare, others with weapons obsolete and strange, brown-bills, and glaives, and maces—each court and alley, from the purlieus of Alsatia quite to the Tower, was blockaded and beset. Chains were made fast athwart the most frequented avenues; and barricades of stone and timber, heaped rudely but effectively together, above which yawned the mouth of many a ponderous cannon, would have pre-



ted no small obstacles to any who should

ite. Huge bonfires

washed artisans, who formed the bulk of the assemblage; though they were mingled here and there with grave and well-attired burghers, their morions and gorgets at variance with their civic garbs and golden chains—with young and ruffling templars, to whom aught savouring of frolic or of fight was most congenial—and with sad-visaged and morose soldadoes, in suits of buff tarnished and soiled by service, girded with broadswords of unwieldy length, fresh from the German wars, or the Low Countries (then, as in every afterage, the battle-field of Europe)—all keeping up, throughout the livelong night, a dissonance of tongues as loud and jarring as ever rent the air around the heaven-defying Babel.

At times a sudden panic would run through the crowd, none knowing whom to trust or whom to flee—a cry would ring above the mingled din—"The cavaliers! The cavaliers! Flee! Flee! The King and his wild cavaliers are up to fire the city!" and without waiting to inquire, or to hear, the mob rushed they knew

not whither, trampling the aged and the feeble underfoot, and turning oftentimes the very weapons, they had belted on to guard their liberties, against each other in the blind and reeling rout. Meanwhile with words of fire and gestures of defiance, some bolder spirit would brave the panic-stricken throng, and rally it, and lead it back with brandished arms and inflamed features to meet the foemen who existed only in their imaginations maddened with terror and excitement.

assail the city-gates, and drag the impeached traitors forth from their stronghold at point of partisan and pike!—Others deploring the rash steps already taken, and protesting against further violence!—and some, the nobler and more upright spirits—Falkland and Hyde, and their associates—holding themselves aloof in deep resentful sorrow, that all their wisdom had been wasted, and themselves distrusted, and deceived.

Never was a longer night followed by a sadder morning; for although daylight calmed the terror and the tumult, it allayed nothing of the concentrated wrath, diminished nothing of the jealous apprehensions entertained by either party.

After a short debate the parliament, both Lords and Commons, adjourned for several days, appointing a committee to sit constantly, mornings and afternoons, at Merchants' Hall within the town walls, where they might be secure from further outrage, and free to devise means for vindication of their members, and safeguard of their violated rights.

Edgar informed of the commotions, and anxious for the safety of the city, called for his horse the moment after the adjournment, and, with some six or seven followers well-mounted and equipped, rode up the Strand—a scattered street at that day, occupied by the suburban dwellings of the rich and noble with terraced gardens sloping downwards to the Thames. He was full of calm resolution, and intended instantly to volunteer his aid for putting down the riots, and establishing some governance of law

and confusion had given way to wise and watchful regulation. The shops were shut, and business was suspended, it is true, and all men who went forth wore weapons; but the trained bands patrolled the streets with magistrates at the head of every company, no less to enforce internal quiet, than to resist external force.

Scarce had he ridden twenty yards within the gate, ere a fresh summons roused the wardens, and a king's messenger, after some parley, was admitted and conducted by a file of infantry to hearing of the aldermen then sitting at the Guildhall. The business on which Ardenne came directing him to the same quarter, and strong anxiety to learn the future movements of the court still further prompting him, he at once wheeled to the rear of this small band, and passing onward with them was ushered in without delay to the mayor's presence, and in consideration of his place in parliament accommodated with a seat whence he might witness the proceedings of the day, and

lend his council, if need were, to these the magnates of the city.

To Edgar's astonishment, as to that indeed of all, the messenger announced that His Majesty was already entering his coach, to wait upon the mayor, when he had left Whitehall; and that he prayed that dignitary to call a common council on the instant.

Sir Richard Gourney, the then holder of the office of mayor, although inclined not slightly to the principles of the decided royalists, disclaim-

solute attendants who had convoyed him to the halls of parliament, but with some two or three lords only, and those of the most moderate among his partisans. The shouts, that ran like wildfire along the crowded streets, mingled with groans and yells—the cries "Privilege! Privilege of Parliament!" announced his presence at the doors of the Guildhall, before he had alighted from his coach, and clearly proved the temper of the now thoroughly-aroused and fearless multitude; while, as a token of the perfect mastery of the law, even at that moment of tremendous and wellnigh unparalleled excitement, a daring pamphlet-writer, who had thrown into the monarch's coach a paper bearing inscribed the scriptural watchword, "To your tents, O Israel," was instantly committed for contempt.

The city dignitaries rose from their seats on the King's entrance; they tendered to him all—all to the most minute particulars—that was his due, of reverence and ceremonial greeting; but

there was no heart inspired applause—no loyal spirit-stirring cry "God save the King"—no smile—no welcome! Strange it may seem, yet he had hoped indeed, infatuated man! that he should now succeed in gaining the authorities to yield their honoured guests to his demand; and so commenced what he esteemed a mild conciliatory harangue requiring their surrender. His speech was full of false statements of his veneration and regard in all past times for England's laws and liberties—of his affection for

of so many arbitrary acts against the corporate and individual interests of the city, he vouchsafed to one—the worse affected toward his person—of the sheriffs, the honour of dining at his house; where he was served, together with his retinue, with more than courtly luxury—with all respect and honour, paid not to himself but to the station which he so ill occupied; but with no semblance of that glad alacrity, that honest and ungrudging heart-service, which is well worth a world of bended knees and hollow ceremonial.

In the evening—harassed in spirit, and fatigued in body, irritated by the reproachful hootings of the multitude that jarred at every instant of his homeward progress on his reluctant ear, and hopeless now of compassing his tyrannical ends—the King retired to his palace, there to give impotent and childish vent to his indignant spleen, by publishing a proclamation against all men who should presume to harbour or conceal the persons whom he had previously denounced as traitors.

Days passed away; each marked by some bold resolution of the Commons—by increased tokens of the deep respect and admiration entertained by the great bulk of the metropolis toward the vindicators of its rights—and by some weak and useless aggravation of his former measures on the part of the misguided and ill-governed monarch.

A week had scarcely rolled over their heads before the House, conscious of its own strength, and knowing the entire impotence of the King's

days as faithfully assisted him with life and fortune, were not entirely sorry for the occurrence of a marked reverse, which they fondly hoped might avail to check him in his inordinate and reckless cravings (cravings which to their own eyes they would not now disguise or palliate) for power unconstitutional, at least, if not tyrannical and absolute.

Bitter—most bitter—were the feelings of Charles, as he went (ungreeted by one loyal acclamation, his absence unlamented by one loyal tear) forth from the palace of his fathers—almost alone in actual fact, but absolutely so in sentiment—the Queen, for whose sake mainly he had embroiled himself with his true-hearted subjects, ungratefully and spitefully upbraiding him, not for the folly of his measures, but for his failure in their execution—his courtiers, who had urged him on to every fresh aggression, and lauded every new caprice, now silent and dejected—and the very guards who rode before his coach dispirited and crestfallen. Bitter—most bitter—were his feelings, but it was not

with the bitterness of manly and upright repentance—not with the bitterness upspringing from the sense of wrong committed, and resulting in a promise of amendment—but with that of discontent and disappointment, of unholy wishes frustrated, and merited reverses sullenly remembered.

Such were the feelings of that bad monarch and unhappy man, as he drove forth, that so he might avoid the triumph of his disaffected subjects, after the shades of early evening had

the strength of popular opinion, founded on the broad base of justice—animated by the deathless love of liberty—and directed by such a knot of patriots, as England in no other age had witnessed. On came the fair procession, marshalled by loud triumphant music, and the yet louder shouts of honest and exulting myriads, gay with a thousand flags and banners flaunting to the wintry sun, which wore on that proud morning its brightest and most gorgeous aspect; guarded by all the sober strength of civil discipline, and all the orderly and bright array of the well-trained militia of the city; not fluttering indeed with tasselled scarfs or many-coloured plumes, but well equipped with morions of steel, polished till they shone out like silver, and stout buff coats all service-like and uniform, with their puissant pikes thick as a grove of pines, their broad heads flashing in the sunbeams—and arquebuses clearly burnished, as when they left the armoury. Fifty in front they marched, in close and serried order, striding along with regular and sturdy steps, rank

after rank, each as a single man—with that erect undaunted bearing which belongs only to the free, and with the tranquil eye and calm, though proud expression which marks the disciplined law-loving citizen, and not the fierce unruly democrat.

The companies were all arrayed beneath the civic banners of their respective wards, and headed by their captains, mounted well on strong and serviceable chargers, and gallantly equipped in scarlet cassocks and steel corslets.

Then, received by acclamations, that were heard for many a mile around, clad in their ordinary garbs, and wearing in their grave demeanour no tokens of undue importance or unfitting exultation, the denounced patriots rode steadily along, and, headed by their Speaker, the whole House of Commons followed.

No banners waved above them—no gorgeous dresses pointed them for public admiration—no high assumption called the eye to them—yet as they swept slowly forward, a band of gentlemen—mostly of noble, *all* of reputable, birth—chosen for worth and wisdom, to be the delegates of a great people—of a people, the most manly and intelligent, and free of the wide universe—they could not but have attracted the eye, and fixed the untaught admiration of the most stolid or most slavish; what then must they have done, when they were passing before those whose liberties they had asserted at the risk of all that men hold dear?

Close trooping in the rear of these, another strong battalion of the train-bands marched.

Several brigades of field artillery, huge cumbrous iron guns, with tumbrels following and matches lighted, rattled and groaned over the rugged pavements, and a long train of well-appointed horse, of each denomination then in use—the heavy cuirassiers, with helmets, breast and back-pieces, poldrons and taslets, of bright polished steel, bearing long two-edged broadswords, and pistolets, with barrels full two feet in length—mounted arquebusiers, with short but pondrous matchlocks and formidable rapiers—

ing even to the horses they bestrode, with fervent prayers and blessings, and with tears of holy joy, and waving kerchiefs, and exulting shouts, to greet the people's friends; and with wild curses on the King, and on his cavaliers, concerning whom they oft and sneeringly inquired "Where be they now, and whither have they fled?"

Meanwhile down the Thames another pomp was floating, toward the stairs at Westminster, second, if second, only to the landward show. Hundreds of lighters, pinnaces, and longboats, dressed up with waistcloths and with streamers, laden with musketry and ordnance, manned by a host of British mariners whose meteor flag even then "had braved, a thousand years, the battle and the breeze," furrowed the broad and placid river; while ever and anon the salvos of their cannon, thundering above the din and clamour of the mighty concourse, announced to the disheartened monarch, even in his sad retreat at Hampton, the failure of his insolent

aggressions, and the triumphant testimony borne by his indignant subjects to the untiring efforts and undaunted resolution of those noble spirits, whom his oppressive madness had converted, step by step, from the most steady guardians, to the most constant foemen, of his person and his crown.

OLIVER CROMWELL:

AN

Historical Romance.

EDITED

BY HORACE SMITH, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF

"BRAMBLETYE HOUSE."

Yet is this tale, *true* though it be, as strange,
As full, methinks, of wild and wondrous change,
As any that the wandering tribes require,
Stretched in the desert round their evening fire;
As any sung of old in hall or bower
To minstrel harps at midnight's witching hour.

ROGERS's *Poems.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CROMWELL.

BOOK II.

"They have drawn to the field
Two royal armies full of fiery youth,
Of equal spirit to dare, and power to do:
So near intrench'd that 'tis beyond all hope
Of human counsel they can e'er be sever'd,
Until it be determined by the sword
Who hath the better cause; for the success
Concludes the victor innocent, and the vanquish'd
Most miserably guilty."

MASSINGER.—*The Duke of Milan.*

CROMWELL.

CHAPTER I

Mal. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty—
Macd. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men
Bestride our downfallen birthdom.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Macbeth.*

A YEAR had passed since Ardenne's landing on his native shores, unfixed of purpose, and, above all, an advocate for peace!—a year in which events had taken place that rendered

hopeless all accommodation between the hostile parties, until one should have been proved decidedly superior. The very day on which the King had fled from London lest he should witness the return of the five members to the House, having been signalized by a most wild and ill-digested movement of the fiery Lunsford, sufficiently disclosed the intentions of the royalists by an attempt to seize a magazine of arms at Kingston—Then came the treachery of Goring—the King's fruitless effort against

on his first interview, appointed general of the cavalry. The royal standard had been raised, some two months past, at Nottingham, with evil omens, and under auspices the most unfavourable—a mighty tempest having poured its fury on the gathering of the troops, dispirited, and few in number, and unfurnished with the most evident and indispensable equipments of an army—weapons, clothes, and ammunition. The flag itself, displaying, in addition to the wonted quarterings of England, a small escutcheon charged with the royal bearings and the crown, and compassed by a scroll with the proud motto "Render his due to Cæsar," was scarcely elevated, ere a heavier gust of wind, accompanied with floods of rain and a fierce crash of thunder, shivered the staff in twain and dashed the ensign violently to the ground, while such was the increasing fury of the tempest that two whole days elapsed before it could be reared again.

Still, although by this overt act the King had

most unquestionably issued his appeal to the sword, as to the sole remaining arbiter, matters went on but heartlessly and slowly. Each side, averse to throw away the scabbard, paused in grim and terrible suspense, irreconcileably hostile to the other, yet unwilling to incur the blame of being first to strike, or foremost to refuse accommodation. The royal forces, far too weak to court the brunt of battle, aimlessly marched and counter-marched, levying contributions in this place, and mustering volunteers

hopes and fears of the most eminent and upright men of either party. How it should ever have been fancied, much less gravely argued, that the great body of the English gentry and nobility was anxious to subvert the constitution, which had been freed from the arbitrary power of the Norman princes by the sole efforts of their order, and to erect an absolute and unchecked despotism, which must have necessarily ruined their own caste, it is most difficult indeed to comprehend or to conjecture. Nor is it less absurd to hold, that the more liberal peers, who, neither few in number nor deficient in sagacity, enlisted on the people's side, were in the least degree prepared to overthrow that ancient monarchy from which they all derived their greatness, and to descend at once from their exalted grade to mere equality with their less elevated countrymen.

In simple fact, the leading men of either party dreaded both defeat and victory, with a nearly equal apprehension; knowing that such

an overthrow befalling either host, as should conclude the other absolutely masters of the game, would be most hopelessly destructive to the liberties of England. It was then in this spirit that the councillors of Charles, scarcely more fearful of reverses which should deliver them a prey to their stern foemen, than of success which would inflame and aggravate the monarch's native haughtiness, laboured with all their powers to bring about some reconciliation; but in vain, their every effort being frus-

an officer experienced in the wars of the Low Countries—three dragoon regiments, to act as horse or infantry, as need might be, under Sir Arthur Aston—Lord Bernard Stuart commanding the King's guards, a *troupe dorée* composed entirely of gentlemen whose annual incomes are said to have exceeded the united fortunes of all the members, who at the out-breaking of the war were voters in both Houses—a good park of artillery under the trusty Sir John Heydon—and the adventurous prince (himself a host) leading the cavalry, consisting of the very flower of the youthful gentry, practised in arms, and high in chivalrous and daring spirit. Then, early in October, having resolved to strike a blow, and anxious to give battle to his enemies, the King marched hastily from Shrewsbury upon the capital.

Meantime the Earl of Essex, who had been recently appointed by the parliament their general-in-chief, left the metropolis with an army, some fifteen thousand strong, more thoroughly

equipped and better armed than were the gentlemen of the opposing host; but far inferior to them in that sustained and burning spirit which is of more avail than tenfold numbers in the day of battle. The earl's instructions were to tender to the King a joint petition of the Houses, beseeching him to leave the gathering of malignants, whose ill counsels had so far prevailed to alienate him from his loving subjects, and to repair at once to the vicinity of his most loyal parliament; and, in the case that this petition

Among the numerous nobles who accompanied the general of the parliament, two perhaps merit an especial notice, the young Lords Rochfort and Fielding—as being destined soon to meet, as foemen in the shock of battle, their own fathers, the Earls of Dover and of Denbigh, who were enrolled as volunteers in the King's guard of horse. Many there were indeed in this array who yielded not in spirit or in valour to the proudest cavalier of Charles, many who panted for the onset with all the patriotic zeal of freemen trampled and oppressed, with all the bitter and fanatic rancour of religious prejudice, and these were more than matches for the best of Rupert's soldiery.—But more were doubtful, and reluctant, and affected by the cold and backward spirit of their leaders, who felt perhaps a secret apprehension that, in battling for the liberty and constitution of their land, they might in some degree be warring with the interests of their order.

Such was the aspect of affairs, and such the state of parties, when on a brilliant morning toward the last days of October, a gallant

regiment of horse was winding through the deep green lanes and devious woodlands of Northampton, towards the small town of Keinton, distant perhaps some twenty miles, at which it was beginning to be understood that Essex had established his head-quarters. An animating spectacle they formed as they gleamed out, or disappeared among the lofty hedges and dense coppices, still glorious in the leafy garniture of unchanged autumn, their polished armour glinting back the cloudless

The leader of this splendid body, was a fine-looking figure in the prime of life, well-formed and stately, and far above the ordinary height of men. He wore a military coat of strong buff leather, garnished with fringe of tawney silk three inches broad, and loops of golden braid, partially covered by a breast-plate, with its corresponding back-piece, polished till they shone bright as silver. He had no gorget, but a rich cravat of Flanders lace with long transparent ends half veiling the clear steel on which it fell. His dark curled hair flowed down his neck beneath the rim of a steel cap, or morion, exquisitely damasked but without crest or feather; his hands were guarded by high gauntlets, and his lower limbs by breeches of the same material similarly ornamented with his cassoc, and strong jack-boots, that would have set a sabre-cut at nought. His sword, a two-edged, basket-hilted rapier of uncommon length, hung from an orange-coloured scarf, betokening his adherence to the parliament—its army having

adopted for their badge that colour from the the ancient liveries of Essex, as the cavaliers had assumed for their distinctive uniform, black feathers, and blue shoulder-knots—although the fashion of his garments and the general bearing of the wearer were more in character with the demeanour and the principles of their opponents, than of those stern and gloomy fanatics, who are so generally and so erroneously believed to have composed the great numerical strength of the liberal, or, to speak more justly, constitional

ing reports of his subordinates; the quick decisive firmness which made known, and the prompt energy which carried out his orders,—might be discovered at a glance the officer of many actions—the soldier on whose mind no lesson of experience had been lost, until his very nature was no more the same; that which was once an effort—once the result of intricate and thoughtful calculation, arising now from an intuitive foreknowledge, more like the wondrous instinct of an animal than the deep reasoning combinations of a man!

It lacked perhaps an hour of noon, when this detachment having extricated itself, without so much as hearing of an enemy, from the wide extent of woodland, portions of which may still be seen in the adjacent counties of Huntingdon and Bedford, had reached the summit of a considerable eminence; which falling away steeply toward the west commanded an extensive view over the velvet pastures of Northampton, checkered with corn-fields and dark tracts of

fallow—with many a whitewashed cottage peering from out the foliage of its orchards, and many a village steeple with its mossy graves and tufted yew-trees, and here and there some castellated mansion scarce seen amid its shadowy plantations—stretching away till they were bounded far to westward by the blue hills of Warwickshire.

Just on the brow of the declivity there stood a large and isolated farm with stabling and outhouses sufficient to accommodate a hundred head of cattle, upon the green before which the leader of the party drew his bridle, and, after a quick glance across the champaign at his feet, and another toward the sun which had already passed its height, entering the dwelling, he held

during an hour's halt. A hasty bustle followed, as down the troopers sprang with jingling spur and scabbard, and merriment suppressed no longer by the rigid discipline enforced upon the march. No oaths, however, or profane and godless clamours were heard, disgracing equally the officers who tolerated and the men who uttered them. Gaiety there was, and decent sober mirth, but nought of boisterous, much less licentious revelling:—videttes were stationed on commanding points, patroles detailed — and then, the horses picketed and well supplied with provender, fires were lighted and canteens produced with all their savory stores; and the men, stretched at length on the smooth green sward, chatted and laughed as gaily over their hurried meal, as though they were engaged in some exciting sylvan exercise, and not in the tremendous toil of warfare.

The hour allotted for their stay had well-nigh passed — when from their further outpost a horseman galloped in, bloody with spurring,

and, making way through the scattered groups, flung his rein heedlessly upon his charger's neck, and turned him loose before the door, while with an air betokening the consciousness of high bearing and stern intelligence he hastened to convey his tidings to his officer.

There needed not, however, words to tell the men that danger was at hand. A moment's anxious gaze at the vidette, and the jest ceased, the flagon was suspended ere it reached the thirsty lip, the laugh was not laughed out.

breath"—he added, turning abruptly to the bugler, who was already handling his instrument—"till it be needed for a charge, which, an we be so lucky as I deem we are, we may make, and right early. Sir Edmund Winthrop, have your men into line as speedily as may be; but move not, until further signal! My charger, Anderton, and let a serjeant's guard mount instantly!—I go to reconnoitre—a bugler with the subaltern!—Steady, men, steady!"—and, without further pause, he leaped into the saddle, and, followed by the small detachment, galloped at a fierce pace down the hill-side, rugged and broken as it was, in company with the patrole who had brought in the tidings.

Close to the bottom of the hill, whereon the troops were halting, there ran a deep and hollow gorge, cutting across the road, which they had kept thus far, directly at right angles, and screened from observation on the upper side by a long straggling belt of furze and underwood, with here and there a huge and weather-beaten

oak or glossy beech, forming the outskirts of a heavy mass of forest that fringed for several miles in length, the extreme left of the level country across which their line of march would lead them. Through this gorge, as the sentinel reported, a powerful force of cavalry was moving toward the high road, at scarcely two miles distance, but whether friends or foes he might not, as he said, determine.

Checking his charger at the junction of the roads, the officer dismounted, and taking off his headpiece, lest its glitter should betray him, stole forward through the trees to a high sandstone bluff commanding the whole gorge. From this he instantly discovered the approaching troops, who had so nearly come upon him un-

attempted, as he said, a cross-road visible from the hill-side; but it had proved so miry, as he judged from the slow progress of the guns, that they had countermarched, and were advancing steadily, as now beheld, under the guidance of a countryman who rode beside their leader, toward the sandy gorge by which they evidently hoped to gain the practicable road.

Earnestly did the wary partisan gaze on the glittering columns, searching their movements, and examining their dress and arms with eager scrutiny, and ever and anon sweeping the country in their rear with an inquiring glance, that seemingly expected further indications from that quarter. But it was all in vain. The regiment in view wore neither scarfs nor any badge that might inform him of their politics or party—their colours were all furled around their staves and cased in oil-skin—and all, from which he might in anywise conjecture of which host they formed a portion, was the exact and veteran discipline their movements indicated—far too exact, as he supposed, from the reports prevailing through

the country, for the tumultuary levies of the puritans.

The hollow way on which they were advancing opened at a mile's distance on the plain, and it appeared that the new-comers were about to enter it, unthinking of surprise, and confident, perhaps, in their own power.

"If they be foes, we have them!" cried the partisan. "Back, Anderton, back to the regiment—ride for your life!—Tell Armstrong to lead down three troops, dismounted, with their

And with the word the subaltern dashed furiously away, spurning the pebbles high into the air at every bound, and instantly was lost to sight behind the angle of the sandy banks; while he who had commanded, after another wistful gaze toward the approaching squadron, returned with leisurely and quiet steps to his good charger. With his own hand he drew the girths more tight, looked to each strap and buckle of the rein and stirrups, patted her arched crest with a fleeting smile, and mounting rode with half a dozen followers sharply along the gorge, as if to meet the strangers, who now seemed disposed to panse upon the plain and reconnoitre, ere they should enter a defile so perilous and narrow.

Just at this moment—while a score or two of troopers rode out from the advanced guard of the horse which had now halted, and warily dispersing themselves among the broken ground began to beat the thickets with deliberate and jealous scrutiny—a low, stern hum arose from the dark corps of cuirassiers—increasing still

and swelling on the ear, till it was clearly audible for a full mile around, a burst of deep-toned manly voices—harsh perhaps in themselves and tuneless, but harmonized by distance, and the elastic atmosphere on which they floated, till they were blent at last into a solemn and melodious sound. Louder they rose and louder on the breeze, and now were answered by a faint echo from out the dim aisles of the forest in their rear, among the leafy screens of which the arms and standards of another and

"Arise!—arise! oh God—our God arise!
Ride on in night, in terror, and renown—
A kindling flame, their nobles to consume—
A two-edged sword, to smite their princes down!

"Thou, that dost break the arrows and the bow—
Thou, that dost knap the ashen spear in sunder—
Thou, Lord of Hosts, that gavest the horse his strength,
And clothed'st the volume of his neck in thunder—

"Be thou our rock—our fortress of defence—
Our horn of safety, in whose strength we trust—
So shall their hosts be chaff before the wind—
So shall their thousands grovel in the dust!

"So shall our feet be crimson with their blood—
Their tongues our dogs shall purple with the same—
The fowls of air shall have them for a spoil—
Their pride shall be a mock—a curse their name!

"For not in armour, nor the winged force
Of chargers do we hope—but only see
Thee, by whose aid their vauntings to outspeed—
Most merciful!—most mighty!—only Thee!"

Scarce had the first sounds reached the leader's ear, before he checked his mare abruptly—"Walters," he cried at once, "away

with you, and overtake him ere he gain the regiment! These be no enemies, but friends! Let not a troop descend from the hill-side—bid them await me, as they be, in order!—spare not your spurs, nor fear to spoil your horseflesh—we have no time to lose! I well had deemed," he added, muttering to himself, after the orderly had galloped off with his commands, "I well had deemed their rear was many a mile advanced past this ere now. Pray Heaven, that Essex lack not men to hold the King in check, as he is like to do, if that this news be sooth how he hath gathered head toward Keinton and Edgehill!"

Without further words, he hastened down the road, to be, as soon as he had cleared the first

colours," waving his orange scarf abroad, as he closed with the foremost trooper.

"Stand, friend, then!—if that friend you be—stand, friend, and give the word!" returned the other gruffly—"Stand! or I do profess that I will shoot—yea! shoot thee to the death!"

"How now, thou peevish knave," replied the officer in high and ireful tones, "recover instantly thy carbine—marshal me straight unto the leader of yon horse! Who is he that commands them?"

For a moment's space the grim parliamentarian stubbornly gazed upon the features of the gallant who addressed him, as if reluctant to obey his mandate, but then a gleam of recognition flashed across his sunburnt features. "I crave your pardon," he said, half abashed, "it is, an I mistake not, Lieutenant-colonel Ardenne, of the Parliaments?"

"Lead on, then, sirrah! since thou knowest me," interrupted Edgar, shortly, "lead on, an

thou wouldst not repent it—and tell me who commands yon horse brigade?"

"Stout Colonel Cromwell," answered the soldier more respectfully, "stout and courageous Colonel Cromwell! He will, I do believe, rejoice at this encounter. This way, good sir, yonder he sits on the black horse beside the standard, awaiting our return. Lo you, he sees us, and the files move onward!"

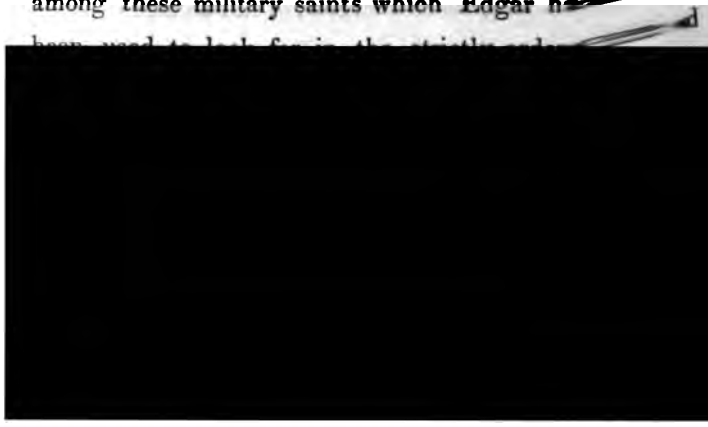
And he spoke truly, for as the cavalry perceived the videttes moving orderly and

devices of the evil one, fringes, phylacteries, and trappings of the beast.

Nor, in the meanwhile, did Edgar turn a heedless or incurious glance toward those with whom, discarding friends and kindred, birthright, and rank, and chivalrous association, as things of small avail compared to the great common weal, he had now cast his lot for ever. The first emotion of his mind was deep anxiety —the second wonder—and the third unqualified and unmixed admiration. Never he thought, in Germany or France, never among the veteran legions of the Lion of the North, the Protestant Gustavus, had he beheld superior discipline, or men more soldier-like and promising. Mounted on strong black chargers, of full sixteen hands in height, their furniture of the most simple kind, but well designed and in the best condition—their iron panoply, corslet and helm and taslets, stainless and brilliant—and above all, their bearing and demeanour—their seats upon their horses, firm yet easy—their muscular and well-

developped limbs—their countenances full of resolution and breathing all—despite the difference of individual character, and the various operations of the same affection on minds of different bias—a strange expression of religious sentiment—solemn in some, and stern, or even sullen—in others wild, fanatical, exalted, and triumphant—yet in all more or less apparent as evidently forming the great spring and motive of their action.

Still, though attentive in the first degree to the essential rules of military discipline, keeping an accurate and well-dressed front, and, managing their heavy chargers with precision, there was not any of that deep respectful silence among these military saints which Edgar h[illegible]



mark the knotted brows and clenched hands of the vehement disputers, arguing—as it would seem from the decided gestures, and the texts which he occasionally caught, lending an elevated savour to their homely language, and more than all from the continual appeal to the well-worn and greasy bibles which each of these stern controversialists bore at his girdle—on questions of religious discipline, or points of abstruse doctrine.

Although this mixture of the soldier and religionist, this undue, and, as it seemed to him, irreverend blending of things good and holy with the dreadful trade of blood, jarred painfully on his correct and feeling mind, he could not but acknowledge that this dark spirit of religious zeal, this confidence in their own overweening righteousness, this fixed unwavering belief that they were the elected and predestined instruments of the Most High—"to execute," as he could hear them cry aloud, "vengeance upon the Heathen, and punishment upon the

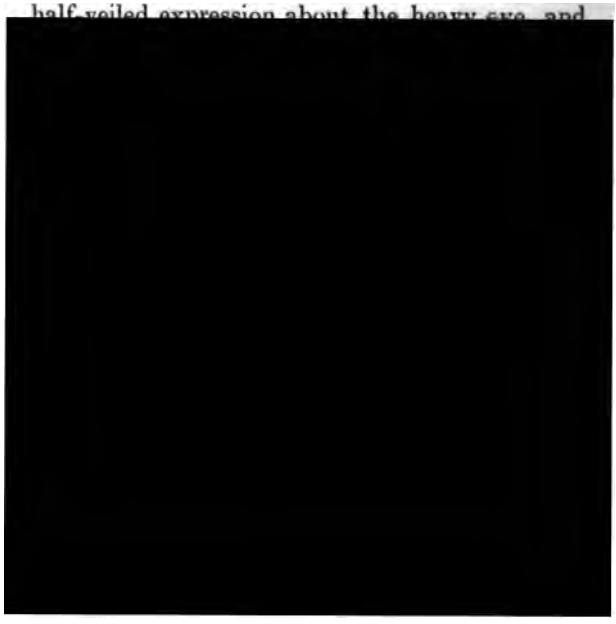
people! To bind their kings in chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron!"

Here was indeed a mighty and effective agent to oppose that chivalrous enthusiastic bravery, that loyal self-devoting valour, which inflamed the highborn army of the cavaliers to deeds of noble daring. Nor did he entertain a doubt, when he perceived the extraordinary person who commanded them occupied in preaching, or expounding rather the mysterious prophecies of the Old Testament—to which especially the

of Huntingdon by his own personal and private influence, than of his services performed already, not either few or inconsiderable, keeping the cavaliers in check, surprising many of their leaders, anticipating all their meditated risings, and cutting off all convoys whether of money or munitions, throughout the counties of the Eastern association—the colonel, as he met the eye of Ardenne, was seated on his powerful black war-horse, bestriding him, as it would seem, with giant strength and perfect mastery of leg and hand, but with an air wholly unmilitary and devoid of ease or grace—sheathed nearly cap-à-pie in armour of bright steel, heavy and exquisitely finished, but utterly without relief or ornament of any kind. A band or collar of plain linen with a broad hem fastened about his short herculean neck varied alone the stern simplicity of his attire. No feather waved above his low and graceless casque—no shoulder-knot or scarf bedecked his weapon, which was girt about his middle, by a

belt of buff three inches at least in width, and balanced on the right side by a formidable dudgeon and the brass-bound case of the familiar bible, which he now held extended in his left hand, while with the finger of his right he vehemently smote the open pages at each emphatic pause of his discourse.

Cromwell's features showed not now so sanguine or so kindled as when Ardenne last beheld them; but on the contrary there was a mild half-veiled expression about the heavy eye and



his superior—much less for marking the diverse features of the martial auditors—for, as he drew nigh to the spot whereon they stood, Cromwell had ended his discourse, and with a word or two of military precept was dismissing his attendants to their several stations. Several dashed past him as he rode up to the little eminence on which the colours were erected, and but two were waiting near the colonel when he reached him—one, a bull-necked, coarse-featured, and ungainly-looking person with a gay feather in his morion, a tinsel tassel on his rapier's hilt, and a falling collar of some low-priced lace hanging above his gorget; — the other an erect and well-made man, not past the prime of youth, with features singularly noble and expressive, though of an almost Spanish swarthiness, and tinctured with a deep and melancholy gravity.

"Ha! Master Ardenne!" exclaimed Oliver, his eye joyfully flashing as he recognized him— "Right glad am I to see you—not carnally, nor

with a worldly-minded and selfish pleasure, but in that there will be work to do anon, in which the righteous cause shall need all arms of its supporters! Have you a power at hand?—Where be they—in what force?—Not travel-worn, I trust me!"

"Three hundred horse," Edgar replied, "on the height yonder—but for those trees you might behold them where we stand!—I left them but just now to reconnoitre your advance, under Sir Edward Winthrop my lieutenant."

make trial. My Lord of Essex hath ere now his post at Keinton—and the man Charles Stuart hath at length mustered head to face him. 'Tis marvel that they be not at it even now. I fear me the lord-general shall lack both horse and cannon, but we have marched already a sore distance with our ponderous guns and heavy armature, nor may I now adventure to press on more hastily without dispersing my command. Ride with me to your regiment, good sir—I trow you were best speedily move forward.—Keinton is barely twelve miles distant, and the roads, they tell me, sound and passable."

As he spoke, touching his charger lightly with the spur, he broke into a managed canter.

"Cornet, advance your colours," he exclaimed in short keen accents, strangely at variance with the monotonous and inexpressive tones of his discourse when unexcited; "Sound kettledrums, and march!" and riding briskly forward easily passed the troops while filing through the lane;

"Halt them here, Ireton," he said to the dark-favoured officer who had accompanied him, as he turned into the main road having outstripped the forces; "Halt them in column, here, within the lane till I return—and Desborough, do thou ride back to Hampden's regiment of foot—it is a mile or so in the rear—and bid him bring it up as rapidly as may be — now, Master Ardenne, I attend you!"

As they rode up to Edgar's quarters, Crom-

right upon the King, and, he was fearful, would fall unawares, and unprepared for battle, upon his very outposts.

"These tidings I received of a sure hand," he added, "though whence it needeth not to advertize you—Whom the Lord listeth to enlighten surely at his own time shall he inform him. But so it is—and it may be that Essex knoweth not his peril!—Wherefore I pray you —Ha! be these your men?—I do profess to you I hold them stout and soldierly—not like the drunken tapsters and vile turn-coat serving men, who (fy on it! that I should say so) do compose the bulk of our array! Truly these fellows shall do credit to the cause—so that the spirit—the right leaven be toward—and the Lord strike on our side!—Wherefore I pray you lead them, as swiftly as you find consistent with order, upon Keinton.—If that they have not yet joined battle, say thus to the lord-general, that I beseech him hold off from them so long as he may

—I shall be with him by nine of to-morrow's clock. Ha!—heard you nothing?"

He broke off abruptly, as a deep distant sound rolled heavily upon the air, and before Ardenne might reply, the sullen rumbling was again repeated, like the faint muttering of a rising thunderstorm or the premonitory growling of an earthquake.

"It was not thunder!" answered Edgar, but in the voice of one asserting, rather than ques-

"Away, sir—God go with you!" cried the stern puritan, excited now beyond the bounds of self-restraint; "Tarry not on the way, nor loiter! Gird up your loins, I say—Ride on!—ride on, and conquer! Verily, but that it is the Lord's own doing, verily, Edgar Ardenne, I would have envied thee thy fortune. Ride on!—thou shalt be yet in time. Ride on—Amen! Selah!"

While he yet spoke, the officers and men, stirred up already by the near sound of battle, and almost maddened with excitement by the exulting and prophetic cries of Cromwell, were vieing with each other, these to give forth, those to obey, and almost to anticipate, the needful orders—and as he uttered the last words at the full pitch of his piercing voice, the trumpets rang a thrilling flourish—the squadron, with a single shout, unbidden and unanimous, that spoke the burning feelings of the troopers, swept on at a hard trot, and in an instant not a sound was to be heard save the thick-beating clatter

of the hoofs, mixed with the clang of spur and scabbard, and now and then a boom of the deep kettledrum timing the pace of the advance.

Onward! onward they hurried at the utmost speed which prudence would admit, and which nothing but the admirable quality and high condition of their chargers enabled them to prosecute. Mile after mile was passed, and still the dull and awful roar—the knell of many a gallant spirit—waxed clearer and more clear.

Having accomplished seven miles within the

smoke surging and eddying above the distant hills. The squadron cleared the verge of a low eminence; a gentle valley slept below them in the still misty radiance of a rich autumnal sunset; a tranquil stream wound through it, crossed by a lofty one-arched bridge, built, as was evident from the bright ripples of the ford beside it, merely for use in times of wintry flood, and to the left, at a short mile above the bridge, nestled the whitewashed cottages of a neat country village. The ridge which bounded this fair dale toward the west, though cultivated at the base, and checkered with dark woods and golden stubbles, lay bare toward the rounded summits in unenclosed and open sheep-walks. Above these summits the volumes of smoke rose white as fleeces of the purest wool, and scarce less solid to the eye, relieving every object on the brow, as plainly as though it had stood out against a clear horizon; while all the mingled din of battle rolled up, a near and fearful contrast to the sweet peace of that secluded spot.

Just as they gained a fair view of the valley and the heights beyond, a single figure crossed the opposite swell, dark and distinctly seen; a horseman on a furious gallop!—as he descended, a slant sunbeam glanced upon his iron head-piece—he was a trooper—flying!—another rushed across the ridge—another, and another—a confused and panic-stricken group.

"Forward!—secure the passage of the stream—Forward! Ho! Forward!" and at a yet more rapid pace they plunged down the descent;

have turned, but a fresh roar of cannon from behind decided him. "All's lost!—all's lost!" —he cried—"all's lost—Fly! fly! Rupert is close behind!"

"Silence, for shame!"—shouted the partisan —"coward and slave, be silent, or I cleave thee to the earth! If all be lost, why rages yon hot cannonade?—How far from this to the field?"

"A short three miles," replied the other, trembling and fearful no less of new acquaintance, than of the foes he fled. Meanwhile on came the rest—all panic-striken, travel-soiled and weaponless; but not one man was wounded.

"The cowards!"—Edgar muttered, as if carelessly, when he rejoined his men, fearful lest they might be disheartened. "The vile dastard hounds! that fled without blow stricken, or blood drawn! But that 'twere loss of time, I would draw out a file for execution. We will advance, and win more easily, that none are left to cumber us with heartless counsels! Fly on, ye dogs"—he said more loudly, as he wheeled

his men once more into their column—"Fly on, and pray, the while ye fly, that ye meet not with Cromwell on your route, else shall ye but repent that the cavaliers made not an end of ye before your race began, for, an I know him, he will cut it right short with a halter or a volley!"

And with a scornful laugh he cantered on, eager to gain the vantage of the hill, and seeing at a glance that no more runaways poured over it.

"It cannot be"—he said to his lieutenant,—

in bodies — to the south toward the town of Keinton, in a line nearly parallel to the range of heights on which he stood, while in the middle distance he might see a torrent of dispersed pursuing cavalry with flaunting plumes and fluttering scarfs, swords brandished to the sun, and pistol shots all redly flashing out through the dense smoke, as unrelentingly they urged the massacre. But as he looked more stedfastly upon the scene, he could distinguish, at some two or three miles' distance toward the northern verge of the unbroken valley, two dark uninterrupted lines whence rose the smoke, and burst the vivid flashes of artillery, with undiminished vigour; he could discern, between the cloudy screens, the wavering and wheeling masses that still waged the balanced fight; and he could hear the rattling volleys of the musketry sharp and incessant.

"'Tis but our cavalry"—he said—"'tis but our cavalry that fly, and their horse-general has lost a golden opportunity; had he but wheeled

upon our flank, when the dog troopers fled, [redacted]he might have gained the battle! but it is now to[redacted]o late, and, an he look not out the sharper, w[redacted]ve may yet give him a rebuff he dreams not o[redacted]f. Sound trumpets—ha! sound merrily, a rall[redacted]y and a charge! Advance, brave hearts, we wi[redacted]ll redeem the day. For lo!" he added with ran[redacted]re tact, as he perceived the royal horse relaxin[redacted]g their pursuit, and heard their bugles winding [redacted]a recall. "For lo! they have perceived us, an[redacted]d retreat already."

And down the slope he moved in admirable [redacted]le order, interposing a small wood between his [redacted]is force and the retiring cavalry of the victorious [redacted]us royalists, whom, notwithstanding his most po[redacted]o- litic vaunt, he little wished at that time to[redacted]to encounter.

aware of their mistake in urging the pursuit too far; for he might see them straining every nerve now to repair their error, as they swept back toward the left-hand rear of the contending parties, leaving thereby the access to the right wing of Lord Essex, whom Ardenne justly deemed to lie between himself and the King's forces, easy and unobstructed.

Instantly he perceived, and profited as instantly, by this advantage, of marching at a sharp trot across the field strewed with the mangled carcases of those who, by their dastard flight, had lost the wretched lives they sacrificed their honour to preserve, and forfeited all claim to that precarious boon—a soldier's pity.

Once on the level ground, he could discover nothing further, and the suspense was fearful—and now the cannonading ceased—the musketry fell thicker and more constant—then that ceased likewise, and was followed by the faintly-heard hurrah of charging horse, and the wild chorus of a psalm.

"The day is ours!" he shouted, as he recognised the sounds; "on! on! to share the glory!"

Faster they hurried; and but little time elapsed, ere he brought up his squadron without the slightest opposition, or, indeed, notice on the King's part, to the extreme right of the position occupied in the commencement of the action by the army of the Parliament. The moment was indeed most critical, and Edgar could not but perceive—as having left his squad-

rians utterly naked and unguarded; so that a single charge by either of the royalist commanders upon their flank or rear, which they had gained, must have annihilated all of their array which yet stood firm—the foot under the earl in person, and a reserve of horse under Sir William Balfour.

But with that desperate and selfish fury which neutralized, in every instance, the effects of his undaunted valour, Rupert passed the left as Wilmot passed the right of Essex, trampling and cutting down their unresisting adversaries for several miles' distance from the field, the former suffering his men to sack the town of Keinton, and to disperse among the baggage of the enemy, while his desertion had not only robbed the King of all his hopes of victory, but actually placed him in a more evil plight, and peril far more imminent, than that in which defeat had placed the foe. For Balfour, with his squadron of reserve, seeing the plain entirely clear of horse, had charged the royal foot with such a

steadiness of persevering courage, that he had cut the Earl of Lindsey's regiment to pieces, taking that nobleman with his brave son, Lord Willoughby, both desperately wounded, prisoners—winning the King's own standard—throwing the centre into perilous confusion, and hewing his way almost to the person of the monarch.

Just at this moment, when a bold advance of his own line must have completed the King's ruin, Lord Essex was compelled, by Rupert's re-appearance on his rear with his fast-rallying cavalry, who, though in disarray and tired, both horse and man, were flushed with their success and high in spirit, to recal Balfour to make head against him; and that bold leader's trumpets were calling off his troopers from their half-

admirably disciplined, and full of daring confidence in their tried leader, and with such promptitude and regularity did they manœuvre and deploy in face of a superior body, that he almost regretted that there was no better opportunity to prove their mettle, and to flesh their maiden swords.

His duty quietly performed, and the reserve of Balfour being re-formed in haste and fronting Rupert, he was commanded once again to occupy his first position on the right; and now, instinctively, he saw that either army might be deemed half conquered; that a single charge—nay, but a single demonstration—would suffice to win an absolute and undisputed victory. Each host was spiritless and disarrayed—the leaders on each side confused and doubtful—the troops exhausted, slack, and heartless.

Vainly he prayed the general-in-chief to suffer him to risk his single regiment in but one charge on Rupert's half-collected squadrons; pointing out to him clearly, but without effect, the strong

presumption that his fresh men and vigorous horses must sweep away, like dust, the cavaliers worn out with the lassitude for ever consequent on over-fierce excitement, and troubled further at finding themselves asssailed, from having of late been assailants, and the certainty that if such should be the case, undoubted conquest must ensue.

The earl was cold and dubious: "we may not hope," he said, "we may not hope for victory to-night. It is a mercy from on high—I

mund Verney, the bravest and the best of the army, all lost—all lost in this accursed quarrel! Two more such fields as this were fatal to the King, while ten such would but leave us, at the worst, where now we are!"

Slowly and unconvinced Edgar rode back to his command, and as he watched the movements of the enemy now holding the precise position they had occupied three hours before, whatever doubt he might have entertained till then, vanished at once, for he beheld the hapless Charles—armed as becomes a King to battle for his crown, all steel from spur to helmet, a mantle of black velvet with the star and George of diamonds floating above his armour—to rein his snow-white charger gallantly along his wavering lines, beseeching them—"Once more," with energetic gestures; "once more to charge the rebels!" and he beheld the faint and false-hearted denial; for not by any prayer or promise could those to whom he spoke with words of

fire be wrought upon a second time to da
onset.

Meanwhile, the sun set gloriously in a
bank of clouds; the night, "that co
friend to wearied and dismantled armies,'
darkly down upon the plain, and all its
and sounds of agony and horror; and th
hosts, each upon the ground whereon they
slept anxious and uneasy on their arms—
tain of their present safety, and unresol
to their proceedings for the morrow.

CHAPTER II.

Behold! our swords are drawn!
Not for the bubble fame, nor at thy call,
Vaulting ambition, who o'erstrid'st the neck
Of prostrate kings, to mount with foot profane
Thrones of usurp'd dominion; but for right,
For freedom, for our country, for our God!
And think ye they shall e'er be sheathed again,
Till that this solemn cause adjudged be,
In high heaven's sight, by victory or death?

THE morning was yet gray and gloomy, after a night of frost—felt the more bitterly by those who bivouacked upon the field, since there was neither tree, nor hedge, nor any other covert

nigh to fence them from the piercing win- d- when Ardenne started from the disturbed s- nd unrefreshing slumbers which had crept upon h- im beneath the partial shelter of an ammunit- on tumbrel, overturned and broken. He was u- p- roused by the loud trumpets of the power- ful reinforcement brought up before the promis- ed hour by Cromwell, consisting of two thousa- nd foot, Hampden's and Grantham's regimen- s, and his own ironsides, whose presence migh- t, on the preceding day, have turned the doubtf- ul

and curtaining the plain with a thick veil, through which the watchfires of the royal host, at scarcely a mile's distance, burned with dull and lurid redness; the foreground heaped with the carriages of the artillery, horses picketed in their ranks, and companies of men outstretched on the dank soil, sleeping upon no better couches than their dripping cloaks, beneath no warmer canopy than the overcast and gusty firmament.

Nor were the sounds that rose at intervals from the opposing camps, and the deserted battle-field between them, less wild and mournful than the images which crowded their nocturnal area. The measured tramp of the unwearied sentinels, now mingled with the clash of armour, and close beside the ear, now gradually sinking into silence as he visited his farther beat, the clang and clatter of the horse patrole, sweeping, at wider distances, around the guarded limits, and the deep cadence of his occasional "all's well"—the neigh and stamp of restless chargers—the baying of forsaken

hounds, and, sadder and more terrible than all beside, the feeble wailing, the half-heard distant groan, the long-drawn unavailing cry for succour, of maimed and miserable wretches, battling and wrestling with their mortal pangs throughout he live-long night, and cursing the unnatural strength that nerved their fainting and reluctant flesh to strive with that inevitable angel, whom their more willing spirit would have welcomed as a rescuer and friend.

neath no other roof than the inclement sky. A dozen pikes, irregularly pitched into the ground, draped with horse-blankets and watch-cloaks offered a shelter rather nominal than real against the night air on the north and east, while a huge pile of logs sparkled and blazed in front, casting a wavering glare of crimson upon a group of tall and martial-looking officers collected round the person of their leader, which glittered less conspicuously on the arms and figures of a score or two of troopers, who sat motionless on their tall chargers, at some short distance in the rear.

The council, as it seemed to Edgar on his first approach, were absolutely silent; but, as he drew more near, he found that Essex was addressing them, although in tones so low and so subdued that they scarce reached the ears of those for whom they were intended. Nor, as he judged from the expression painted on every countenance (for the lord-general ceased from speaking just as he joined the circle), were his

words calculated to inspire his listeners wi[redacted]h confidence or warlike spirit. A blank despon[redacted]. ing gloom sat darkling on the brows of all, an[redacted]d every eye, save those of the new-comers wh[redacted] stood together and a little apart from the res[redacted] dwelt gloomily upon the ground. It seemed [redacted] meeting rather of defeated and despairing fugi[redacted]tives, than of the bold and dauntless spirits wh[redacted] had but yester-even maintained a more than equal strife against the flower of England's nobles.

heavy eyes about their watch-fires. I ask but for my own stout troop of ironsides—and Master Ardenne's horse here, if he list to join me—I ask but these, and verily I do profess to you, they shall not bide the changing of a buffet. Nay, but we may destroy them utterly, smiting them with the sword, as Joshua smote *them* beside the waters, even the waters of Merom, what time he did to them as the Lord bade him; he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire!"

"It is too late, sir!" returned Essex coldly —"it is too late! The morning will have broken, ere you can get your men to horse!"

"Nay, but not so, lord-general," anxiously interrupted Cromwell—"my troopers be not yet dismounted, and of a truth I do assure you, that their spirits are athirst, ay, and their souls an hungered, to do this battle for the Lord!"

"We will not have it so, sir," replied the Earl shortly and scarcely courteously—"We will not have it so. It might endanger ou

whole host. I pray you, Colonel Cromwell, draw out your horse upon our furthest left, facing thereby Prince Rupert on the King's right wing. And you, fair gentlemen,"—turning to Hampden and to Grantham,—"move up your gallant foot to reinforce our centre. Had ye be been here, but yesterday, I had not feared to gain a complete victory—but now I hold it rash to offer or commence, though by God's help we will not shun, encounter. Sirs, to your posts. The council is at an end. The day is

tain that they must need be faint of heart?—Verily! verily! I say to you, there shall be no good thing befal the righteous cause, while such a leader marshals us."

As he concluded, he turned off abruptly, mounted his horse, and rode away toward his troopers, who awaited their stout colonel in the rear—and, ere ten minutes had elapsed, Edgar might hear them chanting in subdued and sullen tones the melancholy psalm, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul!"—as they marched gloomily away to occupy the post for which they were assigned.

At the same time, the regiments, which for the last half hour had been getting under arms, fell in, and faced the army of the King, which might be clearly seen, as the mists gradually rolled away before the growing daylight, resuming the position it had held before the action of the previous day. The instruments of music sounded indeed, and cheerily, and the bright colours fluttered gaily in the freshening breeze;

but other sign of spirit or alacrity along the serried ranks Edgar saw none, before he reached his own brave troopers, already mounted, and in accurate array, under Sir Edmund Winthrop his lieutenant, and eager—as the heart-stirring shout, with which they greeted their commander, spoke them—for the onset of which they deemed his presence the immediate harbinger.

The sun rose broad and bright, kindling the whole expanse of heaven with his fair lustre, the mist-wreaths floated upward and dispersed themselves into the delicate and scale-like clouds, flecking the azure skies, which promise glorious days; the morning gradually passed away, and noon drew nigh, and still each army

the peaceful heaven from the other, intended it might be to irritate or challenge the foe into some movement that should lay him open to attack.

The sun now rode high in heaven, and hour by hour the chances of a general action became less imminent. Suddenly, at a moment when all those leaders of the parliament, who deemed it no less for their interest than their honour to give battle, almost despaired of any opportunity for sealing their adherence to the cause—there was a movement on the right wing of the royal host. Directly in the centre of the field, midway between the lines of either army, four light field-pieces, sakers and culverines, had been abandoned on the previous day by the King's infantry, when shattered and disordered, though still fighting with their faces to the foe, by the repeated charge of Balfour's horse.

So rapidly had night set in upon the wearied hosts, and perhaps so fearful were both parties of then doing aught which might provoke re-

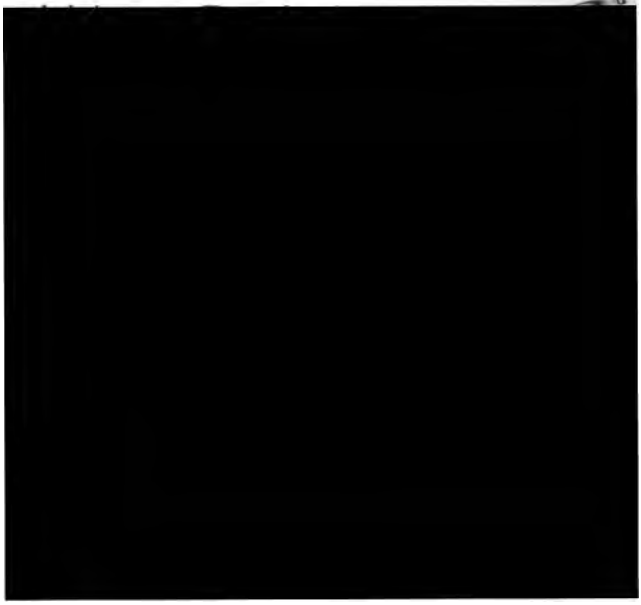
newal of the conflict, that these, the proofs and prizes of the victory, had been permitted to remain unmoved either by rescuer or captor through the long hours of darkness; and, until mid-day was at hand, no disposition was exhibited to bring them off whether by cavalier or puritan. But now—either disposed to fight, if needful, with courage gathered from the weak policy of Essex, or convinced by their inactivity that he should meet with no resistance from the despised and hated roundheads—Rupert dashed

joyous clangor of their defying trumpets, a flood of waving plumes, and fluttering scarfs—the bravest and the best-born of the land. Midway between the hosts they gallopped on, exposing, as it would seem in very wantonness of bold bravado, the flank of their advance to the stern ironsides of Cromwell, who showed like a dark storm-cloud ready to burst upon their heads with all the crash and ruin of a tempest.

Already were these gloomy martialists exchanging their dull scowls of rigid and abstracted sanctity for the fierce flashings of enthusiastic joy, with which they never failed to clothe their features, when rushing down like eagles to the banquet of the sword.—Already were they brandishing their heavy blades aloft in savage exultation—already were they lifting up their voices in the triumphant psalm which should preface their thundering charge, and rising high above the din of battle strike terror and confusion to the hearts of those, whom as they sung—"The Lord—even the Lord of hosts—shall hunt, to

overthrow them!"—But, ere the word was given by their colonel, whose sword was in his hand, outstretched toward the flaunting cavaliers on whose destruction he securely counted, an officer came at the full speed of his spur-galled and foaming charger bearing the mandates of the general.

"Ha! Major Winton!" Cromwell exclaimed, with a raised voice and joyous intonation, "you bring us right glad tidings—tidings which my soul comprehendeth ere mine ear hath caught



"Tush, man, it cannot be!" Oliver fiercely ed—"Nay stay me not!—forego thy grasp on my rein!—Let me not now, I say, or truly vill—"

"Nay sir," returned the officer, cutting ain into his speech, as much chagrined by impetuous gesture and half-uttered threat—You shall do as you list, for me; but I do rn you, 'tis against express commandment of Lord of Essex, if you shall charge these se. See how they muster yonder to the front the main host, dragoons and cavalry, for the port of this detachment. One charge must ds bring on a general action."

'The better!" answered Cromwell, with loomy frown—"the better, an we had aught aith in the good cause, or spirit in our carnal ing. But on his own head be it! Surely the d hath deadened his understanding, causing heart to fail with terror, and with fainting! his own head be it!"—and, as he spoke, he ıthed his rapier, driving it home so furiously

that the hilt rang against the iron scabbard, with a sharp angry clatter—"On his own head be the shame, the ruin, and confusion!"—and turning his charger's rein he rode away toward the rear, in a dark sullen reverie, determined not to look upon the capture of the guns, since he could not prevent it. Nor did he check, in anywise, or reprimand the deep and bitter murmurs of reviling, which the fierce zealots he commanded launched forth against the cold and cautious policy that thus forbid them "to arise

the fearless cavaliers formed face toward the host of Essex to cover their retreat, patiently waiting till they reached the royal lines. Then, with three regular cheers of triumph and derision, they filed off at a foot's pace, as if unwilling to return without exchanging shot of carabine or stroke of sword, even although victorious.

Another hour elapsed, and yet another, and still the armies held their stations steadily face to face, neither advancing to attack, neither disposed to quit the field in presence of the other. Noon was already past, when a fresh movement was observed among the royalists near to the centre of the army. But this time, as it seemed, no hostile measures were intended; for a white flag was suddenly advanced beyond the outposts of the army, and then, preceded by his trumpet, and followed by a glittering train of pursuivants attired in their quartered tabards, Clarencieux king-at-arms, refulgent in the blazoned pomp of heraldry, caracoled forth upon a snow-white

palfrey, whose embroidered housings literally swept the ground.

When it had almost reached the advanced guards of the parliament, the gay procession halted, while its trumpets stirred the echoes of the slumbering hills with a long-flourished blast, calling the leaders of the host to a pacific parley.

But be their errand what it might, their summons called forth no emotion from the stern puritans. No officer rode down to meet them—no peaceful symbol corresponding to their own

After brief ceremonial, the subaltern with half-a-dozen men escorted him along the line, requiring him emphatically, and with a glance toward the carabines of the guard rested upon their thighs in readiness for instant service, to speak no word an he would reach the general with life. Nor was his greeting much more cordial when, after hurrying him with small respect along the serried ranks, the subaltern resigned him to an officer of Essex's life-guard, who with the same stern discipline conducted him toward the quarters of the brave though over-cautious nobleman who held the chief command.

The general was mounted on his charger, with his leading-staff in hand, attired in a suit of beautiful half-armour, with a broad scarf of orange crossing his cuirass, and a feather of the like colour drooping from his morion. The Earl of Bedford and Sir William Balfour were beside him likewise on horseback, and some half-dozen of his staff, while Colonels Hazlerig

and Hampden, stood around dismounted. Essex, with whom he had no personal acquaintance, looked full upon him without word or sign of salutation; but Balfour, whom he knew, bowed slightly.

"I bear, so please you, my good Lord of Essex," the king-at-arms began, in nowise daunted by his cold reception, "a gracious proclamation of His Majesty, Charles, by the grace of God—"

"Hold, sir!" cried Essex, in a sharp and

excitement, the blood rushing in crimson
brow. "To whom, save me, dare you bear any
word?"

"To all," he answered calmly, "to all men
present here, bear I His Majesty's most mer-
ciful—"

"Silence! audacious!" thundered the gene-
ral, "Silence, if thou beest not aweary of thy
life! Knowest thou not, William Le Neve,
knowest thou not that for this breach of every
law of war and nations I might cause thee
hang?—hang like a dog upon the nearest tree
for all thy painted mummery!—Away with him,
sir," he continued after a short pause, as if
ashamed of his display of violence, addressing
the officer who had escorted him; "Away with
him!—see him a hundred yards beyond our
outposts, and, if he do but breathe too
loudly, shoot him upon the instant. I do pro
fess," he added, turning again to the abash
and silenced messenger,—"I do profess to y
you have incurred a very fearful risk; but, t

you may not lack an answer, say to your ma[illegible]er, that we have drawn our swords at bidding [illegible] of the parliament, and in behalf of those ances[illegible]ral liberties, which we will either transmit free a[illegible]nd unfettered to our children, or lose together w[illegible]th our lives!—Thou hast thine answer."

And with even more precaution than he h[illegible]d been admitted, was he led back, to join h[illegible]s followers, by a stout squadron of the genera[illegible]'s life-guard, who, halting at some twenty yar[illegible] from the confused and trembling pursuivants, d[illegible]

retreat, was no less willing to lead away toward Warwick his wearied and disheartened army, abandoning thereby to Charles the access to the capital—which he had marched, and even risked a battle, to defend—whenever he should choose to profit by the errors of his enemy.

Scarce had the orders for this movement been delivered, before a trooper galloped up to Ardenne's post, gave him a packet, and, without waiting a reply, dashed spurs into his horse, and was already out of sight ere Edgar had discerned its purport. It was a mandate from the general in council, directing him to join his force to that of Colonel Cromwell, and place himself at once at his disposal; and he had hardly read it through, when Oliver himself rode up.

"You have already," he said, "as I see, received those tidings, which, trusting that they may not be displeasing, and that so you be not rendered an unwilling instrument in this great cause, I have come hither to communicate.

I am detached forthwith to march with mine own ironsides, and with your gallant horse, for Cambridge—thence to protect the safety of the eastern counties—and, verily, I do rejoice, for my soul sickeneth at coward councils, and, so long as we tarry here, we be not like, I trow, to meet with brave ones. Come with me, Edgar Ardenne, and I tell thee we can achieve great things for the deliverance of this groaning land—yea! and work more for its regeneration with our poor hundreds, and the Lord's hand,

CHAPTER III.

Not for my life! Not though the hosts of heaven
Bend down their knees in suppliance at my feet,
And woo me to consent, shall one poor coin
Defile my palm of what is his by right—
His heritage—bequeathed i' the olden time
From honoured sire to son, and last to him,
Most honoured, who *should* heir it now, as free
As his great soul, and *shall*, by Heaven, for me!

T was a sharp clear evening, some two
ıths later than the undecided action of
ehill, while both the armies were lying in
r winter quarters—that of the King at
ord, whither he had immediately retired

after his treacherous violation of the truce at Brentford, and consequent repulse from London —that of the parliament in the metropolis and its vicinity, when a small group, composed of individuals the most discordant both in character and outward show, was gathered in the oriel parlour of the old Manor-house of Woodleigh, affording to the eye a combination singular and picturesque.

Sir Henry Ardenne stood in the centre at the oaken table, on which a standish was displayed

its drooping feather, and his sad-coloured riding-cloak. His noble features were knit firmly, with an evident expression of resolve, although a tear-drop might be seen to twinkle in his dark eye, as he looked down upon his niece grovelling in the dust before him, prostrate, and clinging to his knees, with her side hair in its dishevelled volumes, half covering her lovely form—with her hands clasped, her eyes uplifted to his face, her lips apart, but motionless, in agony of tearless supplication.

A hoary-headed servant watched, at a short distance, the development of the sad scene, with every wrinkled feature telling of his affectionate concern; while a stout, stolid-looking yeoman, summoned, it might be, to attest a signature, lounged at his elbow, staring in rude indifference on the display of passions with which his boorish nature vainly sought to sympathize.

A small man, meanly clad in a black buckram

doublet, with an inkhorn and a penknife in lieu of weapons at his girdle, of an expression impudently sly and knavish, was the last person of the group within the manor; but without, plainly to be discovered from the casements, there was assembled a fair company of horsemen, gaily equipped in the bright fluttering garb affected by the cavaliers, with the old banner of the house of Ardenne unfurled and streaming to the wintry wind, and a groom leading to and fro the favourite charger of the head

then once more yourself—nor sully, by this deed of unconsidered rashness, a whole long life of wisdom and of honour."

"It may not be," he answered quietly, though not without an effort, as he compelled her to arise. "It may not be. The time allotted to our race hath now run out! The house of Ardenne is extinct, with the old miserable man who stands before you! the lands that have been subject to my name for centuries, shall never know it more! The Lord gave—the Lord hath taken away—blessed be the name of the Lord! But would—oh, would to heaven—that his corpse had mouldered on some foreign battle-field—that his bones had been entombed deep in the caverns of the sea—that he had died by any death, how terrible soever—that he had dragged out any life, however wretched and intolerable! Better, far better had it been, so to have mourned for him, than to have seen him thus—a blot—a single blot—on an unblemished name! a traitor to his king

—a foeman to his country—a curse to him from whom he drew his being! No! plead to me no more—for never, never shall a traitor—a fanatic and hypocritical traitor—inherit aught from me, save the high name he hath disgraced. I have—and I bless heaven that I have it—through his own act of treason, the right to sunder this entail, and sundered shall it be ere sunset! He hath no corner of my heart—no jot of mine affections—himself he hath cut out his path, and—rue it as he may—by that path

but for your rash and sinful self! Pray, uncle, pray for penitence and pardon!"

Affected somewhat by her words, but yet more by the fearful energy of her demeanour, than by the tenour of her speech, Sir Henry paused; but not to doubt, much less to bend from his revengeful policy.

"In so far, at the least, fair niece—in so far, at the least," he said, with a smile evidently forced and painful, "you have the right of it. 'Tis neither christianlike to curse, nor manly.—But to this gear, good Master Sexby!" he continued, turning to the lawyer who had gazed with hardened coldness on the affecting scene. This deed, you tell me, is complete and firm in all the technicalities?"

"As strong as law can render it, Sir Henry," returned the mean attorney, "else know I nothing of mine own profession. Since Master Ardenne being last of the entail, and now declared a traitor by proclamation of His Majesty at Oxford, could scarce inherit, even without

this deed of settlement on Mistress Sibyl and her heirs—"

"Never!" she answered in a calm low voice, the more peculiar from its contrast to the fiery vehemence she had before displayed; "never would I receive the smallest share, the least particular of that which is another's. That other Edgar Ardenne too!—though I should perish of starvation—never! And heirs—what tell ye *me* of heirs? Think ye that *I*—I the affianced bride of such a man—would deign to cast myself away on his inferior? No! no! your testament is nothing worth. Heirless will I die, or die the wife of Ardenne! What, then, avail your crafts and subtleties of law? I spurn their false and fickle toils before me, as the free hawk

"To these? To every dweller of the universal earth would I avow the strength—the constancy—the immortality of my legitimate and hallowed love! Affianced in my youth—by thee affianced—to one whom both my reason and my heart prefer, why should I shrink to own it? Weakness? I tell you, uncle, that I am no whit less strong—nay, ten times stronger than yourself—in faith, in loyalty, in conscience, in resolve! If I may not approve his actions—and, of a truth, I do not—I may not but revere his motives! and if those actions must half sever the strong links that join us, and render me, for very conscience sake, a widowed maiden—his motives, pure and sincere and fervent as an angel's faith, shall, at the least, forbid me to misjudge, much more to wrong him. Weakness! I tell you I adore him—adore him even more for this his constancy to what *he* deems the better cause, when every fibre of his heart is tugging him to the other—when loss of name, and fame, and fortune must be the guerdon of

his unflinching and severe devotion to a mistaken creed! Yet deeply, singly as I love him, never will I wed Edgar Ardenne while he unsheaths a rebel blade, or prompts a rebel council. I tell you I adore him, yet will I die a maiden, unless—" and she paused for a space in her most eloquent appeal, as if to mark what influence it might have had upon the mind of her stern relative—" unless by this your madness you drive me to do that my conscience shrinks from. Suffer your broad lands to descend to him who justly heirs them, and rest assured that sooner will I die than marry with a rebel! Leave them to me—as, in the madness of your passion, you propose—leave them to me, and instantly will I make restitution to the rightful owner, if by no other means, at least by sacrifice of mine

in these miserable lands dependant on your
ion!"

'And wherefore not?" she cried. "Have I
, at the dictates of my conscience, cast from
the affections of the warmest and the highest
rt that ever beat for woman? Have I not
ified unto my sense of loyalty—a sense
hance fantastic or mistaken—my every hope
appiness on earth? And wherefore shall I
obey the voice of the same counsellor, and
sacrifice less grievous? Think you the love
ustice is a less eloquent or weaker advocate
i the mere love of kings?—But since you
not be convinced by argument, nor won by
pleading—hear me then swear, and hear
THOU"—she added, solemnly turning up-
l her bright eyes, flashing with strong ex-
nent and dilated far beyond their wonted
—"that sittest on the wings of cherubim—
u that hast no regard for kings, nor any
: in princes—receive my vow!"—
he paused an instant as if to recollect her

energies, and as she paused a deep voice broke the silence.

"Swear not, my gentle cousin," said the slow harmonious voice—"and above all swear not for me!"

Instantly every eye was turned in the direction whence sounded those unusual accents; and in the sight of all, upon the threshold of the open door, there stood a tall and stately figure wrapped in a horseman's cloak of dark colour, and wearing a slouched hat and falling

n violent emotion—"nor, if you love me, wart my father's will. In good time, I per-ive, have I come hither, since something of our purpose reached my ears e'er you beheld ny presence."—

"And wherefore," his father fiercely inter-upted him, laying his hand upon his rapier's hilt,—wherefore have you presumed, traitor and villain, thus to defile these honourable halls with the pollution of your footstep? Have you come sword-in-hand, leading your canting and psalm-singing hypocrites—to spoil and slay and lead into captivity—or have you come, forsooth, with oily words and a god-fearing countenance to preach to the old man the error of his ways—that he too may unsheath the sword of Gideon, and go down with the chosen of the Lord to strive against the Philistines in Gilgal! Such is the style of your new comrades, and thou canst mouth it with the best of them, I warrant me! Canst thou not preach, and pray?—canst thou

not quote the scriptures of the Lord, to justify the doings of the devil?"

"For none of these things have I come, my father," he replied in sad and humble tones, sinking upon his knee; "nor yet for any thing that may offend or grieve you. Hear me, I do beseech you,"—for by the angry gestures of Sir Henry, he perceived that his speech was like to be cut short—"Hear me but for a short while, and I will cease to pain you with my presence!"

Not a soldier — not a follower — not a
m," said Edgar sorrowfully rising —
ough I look not that you will credit me—
one is with me, nor yet within ten miles of
odleigh. Alone I have come hither, once
ore to say adieu, and crave—what I have no-
thing done to forfeit—a father's blessing!"

"'Tis well!" Sir Henry interrupted him in a cold strain of the most cutting irony, ere he had fully ended—"Excellent well, indeed!—So get you on with what you have to *say*—as I in turn will presently *do* somewhat. Anthony, get you hence and fetch us lights—it hath grown dark betimes—and you, good Master Hughson," he continued, turning toward the yeoman, "will wait our leisure in the buttery. Now! get you on, son Edgar!"

"I did hope," sadly replied the partisan, "that your resentment, sir, had in so far abated, hat you might have endured without disgust y passing visit! To offer you the reasons for y conduct, were, in your present mood, I fear

of no avail—suffice it therefore to inform you, that though I may lose much, I can gain nothing by the part I have espoused. That neither power nor place, nor bribe of woman's love, nor proffered rank, nor yet the baser meed of gold, hath tempted me—that neither gift nor guerdon will recompense my service; nor aught else, save the inward quiet of an innocent heart, and the most high approval of HIM who alone can interpret it. But of this enough!—This deed, if I mistake not, which now but waits your signature, is destined to deprive me of my heritage.—My father, as the last save me in the entail, and I proclaimed a traitor," he continued, turning toward the lawyer, "hath, as you deem it, the power to alienate this property.—Hold! interrupt me not.—It may be that he

you, sir, that I would for one moment condescend so to inherit what you would not that I should possess! Annul this futile deed—and I, the last in tail, will join with you to sever that entail for ever! Let this man execute the papers, and, whensoever needed, my signature shall be forthcoming! So, whether King or Commons win the day, shall you be sole disposer of your broad possessions. The son whom you abhor will freely barter all for one short word of kindness—for one last blessing from a father—at whose command how gladly would he sacrifice all, save his conscience and his honour!"

"I take you at your proffer," rejoined the baronet, without one symptom of relenting in his hard eye, without one sign of soft or kind emotion at the devoted generosity of his discarded son. "Base knaves, although they be, with whom you have descended to consort, I can rejoice you have not lost all your nobility of soul. I take you at your proffer. Affix your signature

and seal to this blank parchment—for it may well be, we shall never meet again—and here I pledge to you my knightly word of honour, that it shall be applied as you desire, and to no other end."

A large tear stood on either cheek of Edgar as with a steady hand, and firm though darkened countenance, he signed his name in bold free characters, and so surrendered for himself and for his heirs the title to that noble patrimony, which for so many ages had been graced by the high virtues of his ancestry. But the tear flowed not, nor was the brow overcast, for any selfish thought—by any sorrow for the wealth thus forfeited—by any fond regret for the old home of happier days thus lost for ever. At other

his eye. Quietly he replaced the pen upon the standish, and once more sinking on his knee, "Father," he said, in faltering and husky tones, "I never yet, save in this one respect, have disobeyed or grieved you; your blessing, oh my father!"

"My blessing to a rebel, to a hypocrite, a traitor!—Not though my life should pay for my refusal!" thundered the pitiless old cavalier. "Be grateful that I curse you not;—be grateful, not to me, but to yon pale and suffering angel, whom your false villany hath blighted, for she alone withholds it. Begone!—why tarry you? Begone, and never let me look upon you more! Begone, an outcast from my heart for ever!"

For a minute's space he stood, fixed as the eldest-born of Niobe, pierced by the arrow of the vengeful god—pale, motionless, voiceless. The wretched girl had sunk at the last fearful words, mercifully deprived, for a short space, of sentiment and reason. His father stood between them, with flashing eyes and arms ex-

tended, as if he waited but a pretext to launch upon his head the awful terrors of a paternal curse. It was but for a minute that he stood, doubtful and unresolved—his pulse beat hurriedly, his sinews quivered, his lip paled with anguish—yet in one little minute was the paroxysm ended. "Bless you, my father, bless you!" he exclaimed, in piteous and heart-rending tones. "May the Great Ruler of the universe protect and bless you! Oh! may *you* never know the anguish you have this day heaped

have welcomed those half-uttered words, even as a voice from heaven. The aged servant, who had watched the scene in silent agony, sprang forth as to recal him; but again it was too late. The angry clatter of his horse's hoofs upon the pavement of the court alone announced the keenness of the goad that rankled in the bosom of the rider; and ere an effort could be made to overtake his flight, the demon pride had once more gained ascendancy, and with a darker frown, and colder accents than before, Sir Henry now forbade all further care—consigned his hapless niece to her attendants—gave brief directions to the lawyer for the fulfilment of his cruel policy—mounted his horse, and rode away self-satisfied and stern through the chill darkness of the wintry camp, to join the King at Oxford ere he should raise the standard for his second sad campaign.

CHAPTER IV.

Flourish'd the trumpets fierce, and now

in March the royal hosts were in the field, one in the western counties, commanded by the King in person, and the most dashing of his generals, impetuous Rupert; another in the north, under the gallant Newcastle—the noblest gentleman and most accomplished soldier who fought beneath the banners of his sovereign.

During the first months of the year the tide of fortune had flowed constantly in favour of the cavaliers. In March a desperate action, fought upon Hopton heath, near Stafford, had made small compensation to the parliament, by the death of brave Northampton, for the defeat of Gell and Brereton. Rupert had taken Cirencester, treating his captives with unmanly and relentless cruelty; and shortly afterwards, in the same sort, had captured and half-burnt the flourishing and wealthy town of Birmingham. Nor had the occupation of Reading by the Earl of Essex brought any thing except disaster and disease upon its captors.

A dangerous conspiracy had broken out

among the puritans; and, though suppressed and punished by the deaths of the two Hotham-ams, Challoner, and Tompkins, had yet led many to believe that seeds of discord were sown among the democratic party, which would, ere long, destroy their unanimity for ever.

A heavier and more fatal loss befel, not his own party merely, but the whole realm of England, in the untimely death of Hampden, who was mortally wounded in a trivial skirmish upon Chalgrave field, in Buckingham. He died, as he had lived, a patriot—a martyr to the cause of freedom—his last breath, ere he rendered up his spirit to his Maker, expended in a prayer for his oppressed and bleeding country.

Nor had the partisans of liberty fared much more hopefully in the north: Sir Thomas Fair-

and garrisoned by the Lord Willoughby upon the parliament's behalf. In this important aim they scarcely could have failed, had not the leader of the ironsides, with his brave cavalry (augmented in their numbers to full two thousand men by Ardenne's junction—having already greatly signalized himself by the defeat of a superior force of royalists before the walls of Grantham, and, by the storm of Burleigh House and Stamford), gallantly interposed between the town and Newcastle's advance.

The enemy, amounting to above three times his number, under Lieutenant-general Cavendish, the brother of the Marquis, flushed with their late success — composed of picked men for the most, officered by gentlemen of equal gallantry and rank, and animated by the highest spirit of loyal bravery—had occupied, moreover, a position so commanding, that they could only be assailed by passing through a gateway, and charging up a steep declivity. Yet not for this did Cromwell hesitate an instant, but per-

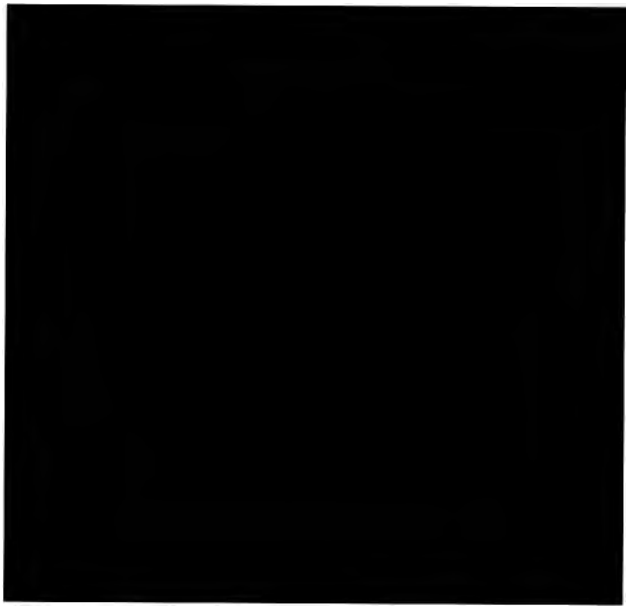
sonally leading on his troopers, he resolutely rushed upon them, and, after a brisk conflict, routed them utterly, forcing them from their position into a deep morass, and killing Cavendish with most of their superior officers.

Burning for vengeance, the main body of the royalists, neglecting Gainsborough, pushed on, and with such overwhelming numbers, that Cromwell was compelled to fall back first on Lincoln, and thence immediately on Boston,

should aid him with his infantry, to action at a disadvantage.

It was a glorious morning in the latter part of June, when, at an hour so early that the heavy dews of summer were yet hanging unexhaled on wold and woodland, although the sun had lifted his broad disk above the clear horizon, the two armies came in view on Winsley field, near Horncastle. It was a gallant and a graceful spectacle as ever met the eye of man. The scene was a broad and waving tract of moorish meadow-land, checkered with many a patch of feathery coppice—birch, ash, and alder—tufts of furze full of its golden bloom, and waving fern; and here and there a bare gray rock peering above the soil, or a clear pool of water reflecting the white clouds that hung aloft, all motionless in the blue firmament—and over this romantic champaign a magnificent array of horse, four thousand, at the least, in numbers, contracting or extending their bright squadrons, now falling into column, and now

deploying into line, as best they might among the obstacles of this their battle-ground—their polished armour, and their many-coloured scarfs, now flashing out superbly as the sunshine kissed their masses with its golden light, now sobered into mellower hues as some great cloud flitted across the sky, and cast its sweeping shadow over them—their trumpets ever and anon waking the echoes of the woodlands that surrounded them on every side, with their exulting notes,



lacking all that chivalrous and splendid decoration which their floating plumes and gorgeous dresses lent to the cavaliers, could the puritans' dark squadrons have been looked upon without attention, ay and admiration also, by the most unromantic of observers. The admirable discipline and perfect armature of the stern zealots who composed the ranks—the plain, but soldierly and bright accoutrements—the horses superior even to the chargers of the royalists in blood and bone and beauty, and above all in that precise and jealous grooming, without which all the rest are little worth—the grim and stubborn countenances of the riders—some animated with a fiery zeal that would have smiled exultingly upon the stake of martyrdom, some lowering with a dark and sullen scowl, but all severe and resolute and dauntless! a single glance sufficed to tell that every battle-field to them must be a triumph or a grave!

Silent they stood and motionless—their long array drawn up, two deep, by squadrons at

brief intervals—solemn and voiceless—presenting a strange contrast to the shifting movements and the intricate manœuvres of their approaching enemy. Not a man moved in his saddle, not a sound broke the quiet of their discipline, save now and then the stamp and neigh of an unruly charger, or the sharp clatter of his steel caparison. And now the cavaliers, within a short mile's distance, having already cleared the broken ground, might be seen halting on the

he swayed him with an absolute dominion, which seemed to arise rather from his mere volition, than from the exercise of strength or skill. His whole soul seemed engrossed by the approaching conflict—careless of self—exalted, and enthusiastical. His eyes flashed with a brightness almost supernatural, from the dark shadow of his morion, and his whole visage wore an aspect so irradiate with energy and mind, that Edgar wondered how he ever could have deemed him ill-favoured or ungraceful. His horse, a superb black, bore him as if he too were conscious of divine authority; and such was the commanding greatness of his whole appearance, that no human eye could have descended to remark the plainness of his war-array.

Of the small group of officers, who rode beside the bridle of their leader, the most were ordinary-looking men, burghers of Huntingdon, or small esquires of the surrounding country, selected for the stations which they occupied

by the wise politician who had levied them, on account of those morose and gloomy tenets which, with an early prescience, he discovered to be the only power that might cope with the high spirit of the gentlemen, who formed the bulk of their antagonists. Men who affected, or imagined, visions and transports—who believed themselves predestined instruments, and deemed that in the slaying of malignants they were doing an especial service to the God

the longest day, showed like a glorious falcon among a tribe of vultures. Yet even he, handsome and young, and fairly clad, filled not the eye like the majestic person of his colonel.

At a quick trot, they swept along the lines, inspecting their array, with now a word of commendation, and now a short reproof, to the dark fanatics who had been chosen lance-pesades or sergeants for their savage and enthusiastic humour. Just as they finished their career, a long and cheery shout, accompanied and blended with the clang of kettledrums and the shrill flourish of their trumpets, burst from the columns of the cavaliers, now wheeling into line, and eager for the onset. No shout, nor burst of instruments replied from the parliamentarians, but their leader at the sound checking his charger from his speed till he reared bolt upright, threw forth his arm with a proud gesture of defiance.

"Brethren!" he called aloud in accents harsh, but clearly audible, and thrilling to the

heart — " Brethren and fellow-soldiers in the Lord—the men of Belial are before you—the persecutors of the saints — the spillers of the innocent blood—godless and desperate!—slayers of babes and sucklings—ravishers of maids and matrons—revilers of the prophets and the law —accursed of the Lord Jehovah!—Wherefore, faint not, nor be of feeble heart, for surely, on this day, shall the Lord yield them up into your hands, that ye may work his vengeance on their heads, and execute his judgments. For

with increasing energy, "and are not we—blinded although we be, and ignorant and sinful—I ask ye, brethren, are not we the chosen of the Lord, and shall we not obey his bidding? Smite them then—smite the idolatrous besotted followers of the old antichrist, even as just Elijah slew the priests of Baal down at the brook of Kishon. Be strong, and fear ye not. For lo! the Lord hath said, 'Ye shall not suffer one of them to live!' and who are we, that we should now gainsay the bidding of the Lord, even the Lord of Hosts? Lift up your voices then, that yon malignants may perceive in whom we put our trust."

Again, and in a sterner and more heartfelt shout, the approbation of the puritans greeted their leader's ears; and, as he ceased, with brandished blades, and inflamed features, and with voices that drowned utterly the feebler music of the cavaliers, already confident of victory, and maddened with religious zeal, they thundered forth their favourite hymn.

"What saith the God of battles, the mighty Lord of Hosts!
Ye shall prevail against them, though loud their godless boasts!
Ye shall destroy them utterly, and root them from the land,
For I will give ye strength, and edge your battle-brand!

"At the rebuke of one shall mighty thousands fly,
For I have heard my people's prayer, their sad and grievous cry!
And I will raise my glorious voice, that it be heard afar,
And show the lightning of my hand—my right hand—in the war.

"Wo unto them that put their trust in the Egyptian's crown;
His horsemen and his chariots! his power and his renown!
The Egyptian he is man, not God, in whom they put their trust;
His horses are not spirit, but of frail and fleeting dust!

"When I stretch out my hand, together they shall fall,

cavaliers, and the rich symphonies of
kettledrum.

reserve of some five hundred men was
he rear, and, in one mighty line, the
forward at a brisk trot, the front rank
carabines all unslung and matches
romwell gazed steadfastly upon them
ınt, then his eye lightened, and his
cornfully, as he addressed his second
d.

ıant-colonel Ardenne," he exclaimed,
two hundred of our best dragooners,
· Fight-the-good-fight Egerton, let
own that gulley to our left, and fire
on the advance of these misproud
!"

a moment's pause the order was
and obeyed, and, ere five minutes
d, the party was detached and
down the rocky bed of the ravine
the royalists, under the guidance of
and bold a puritan as ever levelled
misquoted holy writ.

"Sir Edmund Winthrop," Oliver continued, "your stout lieutenant shall hold your regiment, as our reserve, here on this ground of vantage; but shall not stir from it, unless at your command or mine. We will not tarry for their charge, but meet them horse to horse—an onset of alternate squadrons. I lead the first division, you shall support me with the second. When you shall hear my bugle sound a recal and rally, then strike in, and the Lord strike with you. 'Truth' is our word, and 'Peace.' Amen, Selah!"

Even as he spoke, the royalists gave fire from their first rank; but at too great a distance to do execution, and halted to reload. "Steady, men!" shouted Cromwell (his sword not yet

Scarce had he ended, ere the line again advanced on a hard trot—a single shot rang from the gulley, broken and fringed with thorns and alder-bushes—another, and another—a rapid and continuous fire of skirmishers, picking off half a score of officers, and throwing the right wing of the royalists into some slight confusion. On, however, they still came, their banners rustling, and their gay plumes and baldrics fluttering in the wind, as, trusting to make such impression on the main host of the puritans as should cause their ambuscade to be of no effect, they hurried to the onset. On they came, resolute and dauntless. Their bugle sounded for the gallop, for the charge, and, at the latter call, again the levelled carabines rose to the riders' cheeks—a bright flash ran along their line, and a dense veil of smoke covered their orderly and brilliant front.

Before the smoke cleared away, the shattering volley of the puritans, poured in with a deliberate aim, made fearful havoc in their ranks, and, on the instant, casting aside their matchlocks, and

whirling their long rapiers from the scabbard; one half of the squadrons of the parliament hurled themselves furiously upon the advancing foe.

Eagerly, anxiously did Edgar gaze upon the charge. On went the colonel of the ironsides, six horses' lengths in front of his division, and as gallantly out dashed a leader of the King's to meet him. They met, and it was but an instant, ere the charger of the royalist ran masterless, and its unhappy owner rolled, weltering in blood, beneath the trampling hoofs of the fierce puritans.

There was no faltering—no doubt in either line—forward they rushed, all straining to the charge, their horses foaming and struggling against the bit, and their swords flashing in the

arians like an earthquake, emptying scores of saddles, and hurling riders and horses headlong to the earth.

The smoky curtain once again swept over them; it cleared away, and Ardenne saw his fellow-troopers, unbroken and in close array, so orderly had they closed in above the falling, now mingled hand to hand, and fighting with the cavaliers, whose front was bending like a bow; the points on which the troops of Oliver had charged, beat backward a full pistol-shot, and the alternate squadrons which had met no foe, wavering and undecided what to do. Sword cuts were glancing through the air on helm and corslet, pistol-shots flashed among the *mêlée*; and the shouts, "God and the Church!" "God and the King!" blended with groans, and yells, and curses, and the clash of blades, and the wild blast of trumpets, pealed dissonantly to the sky.

Still Cromwell's bugle sounded not, nor were his men drawn off; and Ardenne paused in

doubt. His eye fell suddenly upon the form of Oliver fighting among the foremost—another volley from a small knot of cavaliers, and he fell, horse and man—and the strife closed more fiercely round him; at the same instant the reserve of Henderson moved up to reinforce his battle. Then Edgar paused no longer—"Forward!" he shouted in a voice of thunder. "Forward—charge home!" and, dashing down the grassy slope, before a minute passed, burst like a thunderbolt upon the unengaged divisions

and the exertions of his superb charger, placed him at Cromwell's side, just as he fell to earth, stunned, but unwounded, by a heavy blow. One of the cavaliers received the point of Edgar's rapier in his throat before he checked his horse; the others were engaged and beaten backward by the foremost of his troopers. Hastily springing to the ground, as Oliver regained his feet — "Mount!" he exclaimed,— "mount, Colonel Cromwell, on my horse, and finish what so well we have begun!"

Without a word the zealot leaped to the saddle, cast his eyes with a quick comprehensive glance around him, and read the fortunes of the day upon the instant.

"They are half-beaten now!" he shouted in exulting tones; "one charge more, and we sweep them like the dust before the winds of heaven! Away, sir, down with the reserve, and fall upon their left flank. I will draw off my men, and, ere you be in action, will be pre-

pared to give it them again in front. Ho! bugler," he continued, as Ardenne, mounting his brown mare, which his equerry had led up, galloped off swiftly to the rear—"Ho! bugler, sound me a recal and rally!"

The shrill notes of the instrument rang aloud above the din of battle, and with that strict obedience, for which they had already gained repute, the ironsides drew off from the encounter in the most orderly manner, and formed beautifully again before the shattered and disordered masses of the cavaliers had fallen into any semblance of array.

In the mean time Ardenne had reached his regiment, the men burning to emulate the glory half achieved by their companions, the horses

treme left of the enemy, now near a quarter of a mile pushed forward beyond their right and centre, which had been most disordered by the fire of the skirmishers, and Cromwell's furious charge. So great, indeed, was the confusion of the Royalists, their officers toiling along the ranks, labouring with oaths, and menaces, and exhortations, to rally and reform the men, that they perceived not Ardenne's movement till he was wheeling into line to the left, previous to charging them. Then, when it was too late, they struggled to redeem their error nobly, but fruitlessly; for, ere they could show front against him, the trumpets sounded—Oliver's in front, and Edgar's in the flank—and simultaneously they were charged, broken, and dispersed.

The action was already over, but the rout, the flight, the havoc. the despair, the hideous undiscriminating massacre, urged to the utmost by religious fury and political rancour, ceased not till noon; when Cromwell's bugles, slowly and

most reluctantly obeyed, called back tl
from the hard-pressed pursuit, their v
blunted and their arms aweary, but thei
insatiate of carnage.

CHAPTER V.

* * upon the bloody field
The eddying tides of conflict wheel'd
Ambiguous, till that heart of flame
Hot Rupert on our squadrons came,
Hurling against our spears a line
Of gallants fiery as their wine;
Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
In zeal's despite began to reel.
* * * * *
Brave Cromwell turn'd the doubtful tide,
And conquest bless'd the rightful side.

SCOTT'S *Rokeby*.

OUGH but of brief duration and trifling tude, as to the number of the troops en-

gaged on either hand, yet was the victory of Cromwell upon Wensley field of vast importance, when considered in its bearings on the general aspect of the war, since by it only was the Marquis of Newcastle prevented from co-operating with the royal forces in the west; when elevated as they were in spirit by the defeat of Waller upon Roundway Down, and the disgraceful fall of Bristol, they might too probably have marched triumphantly to the metropolis, had they been reinforced, as they expected, by the northern chivalry.

In consequence of this repulse then, Newcastle sat down before the walls of Hull; while Charles, thus disappointed in his schemes, as fatally laid siege to Gloucester, which he was

a patriot, or a true lover of the English constitution. The Hampden of the Royalists, this gallant nobleman fell with his country's name the last sound on his lips, but fell not till he had become aweary of a life, which was so imbittered by the disasters of his native land, that he was wont to sink, even when circled by the gayest of his friends, into desponding apathy, and to reiterate, after deep silence and continual sighs, with a shrill sad accent, the words "Peace! Peace!"

The winter which succeeded was by the cavaliers spun out in feuds, dissensions, and intrigues among themselves, the King remaining obstinately bent on prostrating all opposition to his will, and countenancing such alone of his advisers as urged the fiercest and most downright measures.

Not so the parliament at Westminster, in which the independent party were by the death of Hampden first and afterward of Pym, gainin

an ascendancy which was increasing daily through the abilities of Cromwell, St. John, and the younger Vane, the leading politicians and debaters of the lower house. The energy and deep-laid shrewdness of these men suffered not one false step, however trivial, on the part of Charles, to pass unnoticed or unimproved to their advantage; and ere the spring was far enough advanced for the commencement of a third campaign, they had so thoroughly aroused the spirit of the land, inflamed already by the King's impolitic and shameful treaty with the rebellious catholics of Ireland, that early in the month of March five several armies were on foot.

Essex, preparing to oppose the King in per-

Manchester, with Cromwell's cavalry, hurrying from the associated counties of the east toward the same important point.

And now for the first time, since the commencement of the war, did fortune show herself in favour of the liberal party. The total and complete annihilation of Lord Hopton's force at Alresford by Waller was in itself sufficient to compel even Charles to give up all attempt at a campaign on the offensive. Nor was this all, for Newcastle's express advised him that he must surrender, unless succoured in the brief space of three weeks.

It was on this intelligence that Rupert, having achieved much reputation and some eminent successes in that large county, marched out of Lancashire with all the flower of the Royalists drawn from the midland counties, burning with gallant ardour, confident in their successful leader, appointed with a noble train of ordnance, and reinforced by Goring's excellent brigades of horse from Lincolnshire, hastening ably and no

less fortunately to the relief of York, reduced already to extremity, and on the point of yielding to the parliament.

During the dark and melancholy winter, which had thus elapsed, Ardenne in his attendance on his duties whether civil, in the House at Westminster, or active in the field, had struggled with more of steadiness than of success to banish from his heart the recollection of his own depressed and well-nigh hopeless circumstances. Of his implacable and stubborn father he had

time only ere it was invested by the united troops of Fairfax, and the Earl of Devon.

Such was the state of matters, when on a lovely evening of July, some few days after the strong succours under Manchester and Cromwell had joined the northern army, Edgar returned from a reconnaissance, which he had been sent to execute with his whole regiment in that direction, in consequence of rumours that the cavaliers had been observed in force toward the neighbouring towns of Wetherby and Barnham.

During the two days which had been consumed in scouring thoroughly that district of the country, Ardenne had discovered nothing to justify in any sort the vague reports, which had prevailed ere his departure from the camp; and it was therefore much to his amazement that he perceived the forces of the parliament drawing off from the siege in no small hurry and confusion, and forming line of battle upon Marston Moor some eight miles to the westward of the city.

It was not without strenuous exertion, that Ardenne found at length the post assigned to his immediate superior, now lieutenant-general of the horse, who was intently occupied with Lesley, Fairfax, Manchester, and others of the chief commanders, in ordering their army so as to interrupt the gallant host of royalists, some twenty thousand strong, with which Prince Rupert had wellnigh surprised them in their trenches.

Night fell upon them, ere the task was well

part passed the night upon their arms, though some were quartered in the neighbouring villages, commanding the anticipated line of Rupert's march. Patroles of horse and foot swept the surrounding roads; the officers with jealous zeal made constant circuits of the host, their progress being clearly indicated by the acclamations of the men, and the loud psalms of exultation and defiance which usually answered their inspiriting addresses.

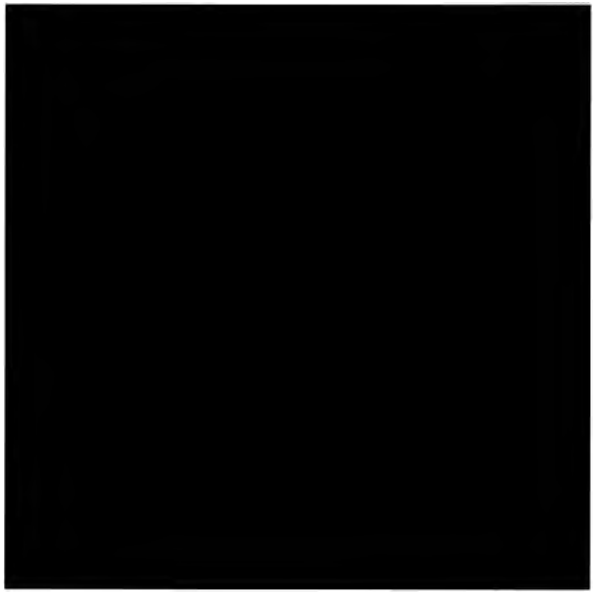
Yet was their active energy on this occasion destined to be wasted; for scarcely was their host arrayed, ere the discharge of ordnance from the town, and the tremendous cheering, which was distinctly borne to the ears of the now disappointed puritans, announced that Rupert, who by the aid of better information, and the exertion of great military skill, had executed a detour far to the right of their position, was actually entering the beleaguered city from the eastward side, whence they had drawn their troops in the vain hope to intercept him.

Great was the consternation and dismay which this discovery created in the breast not of the privates only, but of the best and boldest leaders of the parliament; and in no less degree did merriment and wild triumphant revelry possess the citizens, relieved beyond their utmost expectation. Throughout the livelong night the eastern sky was reddened, wellnigh to the zenith, by the crimson glare of bonfires blazing in every street and place within the walls; while the square towers of the minster illuminated by the fierce discoloured light were visible distinctly at some miles' distance, their huge bells swinging to and fro, a deafening peal of short-lived exultation. Upon the moor a council was called instantly; and sentries posted round

fanatical, enthusiastic, presbyterian clergy whom the Scotch brought habitually into their warlike councils, that no precautions could have hindered the entire army from perceiving that dissensions, fired by their religious differences, and fed to wilder heat by prejudice and national disgusts, had fallen with a perilous and most pernicious influence upon their leaders.

It was now nearly dawn, when breaking up their long protracted session, they at length came forth. Despondency and gloom sat heavy on the resolute and manly brow of Fairfax, as he strode forth and leaped into his saddle, without altering his garb, though in immediate prospect of a general action. He was not indeed utterly unarmed, for he had entered the Court-martial, with but brief time for ceremony, after toiling from the preceding daybreak at the excavation of the trenches; yet did he lack much of the heavy armature which was still worn by officers in high command. A buff coat richly laced with silver, its open sleeves

displaying the white satin of its lining, stout breeches of the same material fringed at the knee with costly Flanders lace, and boots of russet leather formed the chief part of his defensive dress, although he wore a short but highly-polished breastplate, half covered by his falling collar from the looms of Valenciennes, and by the sash of crimson silk and gold which was wound many times about his waist supporting his long silver-hilted broadsword. He bore his truncheon in his hand, and, ere he



effected, the whole position of the army was reformed, and taken up anew; so that its front, which had originally faced toward the west, as to oppose an enemy advancing against York from that direction, was now turned easterly in readiness to meet the sally which they hoped, rather than expected, to be made on them from that same city.

Sir Thomas Fairfax, with his new-levied Yorkshire cavalry, and three Scotch regiments of horse, held the extreme right wing; and next to him the infantry of the brave Lord Fairfax, with two brigades of Scottish horse, in readiness for his support. In the main body and reserve were all the regiments of Scottish foot, appointed well and officered by their own covenanting lords, and two of Manchester's brigades; while the left wing was occupied by Cromwell with all his iron cavalry, and three good regiments of northern cuirassiers, under Lieutenant-general Leslie, and Colonel Frizell's regiment of Berwickshire dragoons, who did

good service in the action, posted yet further to the left, by a cross ditch intersecting the main dyke, which ran along the whole front of the puritans, excepting a brief space before the Earl of Manchester's pike-regiments.

The plain, upon the western side of which the army was drawn up, was, on the whole, well suited for a general action, being of considerable extent, entirely open, and untraversed by any hedge or fence, save on the left, where a long narrow lane, between high banks and

defended point whereon to fall back, if repulsed from their original position; while on both wings the strong enclosures of the pasture fields, studded with hedge-row timber, would present most serious obstacles to any movement of the enemy to overflank them.

Of all the generals, it seemed to Edgar that Cromwell was the least disturbed in mind or aspect; yet even he, as he addressed his ironsides, spoke not with the short, terse, and energetic style which he was wont to use when he chose to be understood, but in interminable and confused harangues, resembling more the doctrinal discourses of a fanatical and visionary preacher, than the heart-stirring oratory of a dauntless captain; nor did he hesitate to declare openly to Ardenne, when at a little distance from the troopers—"That of a truth there was sore need of prayer and supplication—not of lip-service or knee-bending—but of soul-searching cries, of earnest and continual wrestling with

the Lord; for verily, unless he work great things this day in Israel's behalf, verily, Edgar Ardenne, you shall behold this host melting away like snow before the April sunshine—unless the God, even the God of battles, harden the hearts and blind the understandings of yon perverse and fiery Rupert, even as of yore he hardened the heart of Pharaoh, that he might bring him to destruction with his captains and his chariots, and his horsemen—unless he do all this and more, I tell thee we shall fall into the pit ourselves have digged! If the prince have but wisdom to abide in yon fenced city, which he has won from us, then shall you see the carnal-minded, and the feeble-witted of the host—those who, like babes and sucklings, may not endure the rich meats and strong wines of the

lo!" he added, in a quick clear voice, strangely at variance with the drawling snuffle he had thus far adopted—"Whom have we here? Tidings, I trow, from my lord-general."

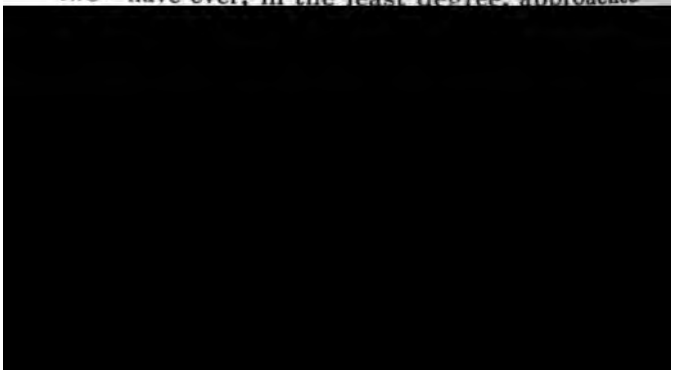
As he spoke, a youthful officer dashed at a hasty gallop up to his side, and checking, for a moment's space, his fiery horse, "The earl," he cried, "lieutenant-general, prays you will hold yourself in readiness for instant action! Rupert and Newcastle are even now without the gates, and marching hitherward to fight with us!"

"Said I not," shouted Oliver, as loudly that every one of his own cavalry might catch the import of his words,—"said I not that the Lord would harden the heart of our foe, and blind his understanding? The Lord he is on our side; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

And instantly he raised, with his own tongue, the first notes of a hymn, in which he was accompanied at once by full five thousand deep and manly voices.

"Not unto us—not unto us be given
The glory and the praise—
Nor to the mortal sword.
Though shrewdly we have striven
Long nights, and bloody days,
But unto thee, O Lord!"

The fierce sounds rolled along the front, from corps to corps, till one half of the host had kindled with the same enthusiastic confidence, and swelled the same high chorus! It was one of those bright flashes of that brightest talent in a leader, the talent of inspiring trust, of awakening energy and zeal, of lighting into sudden flame the hearts of thousands by a single word—a talent, by the way, in which no captain ever has excelled, and probably but two* have ever, in the least degree, approached



echoing for miles around, doubt and despondency passed instantly away—pulses, that but an hour before had throbbed with cold and feeble beatings, now leaped exultingly—eyes, that had rested sullenly upon the earth, flashed cheerfully and vividly to the new risen sun—and tongues, that had half uttered words of evil omen, and almost of fear, now swelled the warlike anthem to the skies.

Before the psalm had yet well ceased, and while its echoes were still alive and ringing in the ear, the pikeheads of the royal foot might be seen twinkling in the level sunbeams, above the coppices and furze brakes that fringed the east side of the plain. And now a massive column burst into open view, their bright steel sallets and their coats of plate reflecting, in broad sheets, the light which flashed in long and dazzling streaks from their tall weapons, as they wheeled from column into line—and now a strong brigade of field artillery, its caissons and its tumbrels following, came rumbling

up at a full trot; and now, with many a blazoned standard streaming, and a white sea of plumes floating above them, squadron after squadron of that superb and high-born cavalry, to which the King owed all his previous victories, rounded a distant wood, and formed in accurate array upon the royal left. Then, as these formed, the heads of column after column debouched upon the plain, their mounted leaders darting along their flanks and fronts, their music sounding joyously, and the thick trampling of their march shaking the very ground beneath them; as these fell in, another train of fieldpieces, and a yet more magnificent array of horse wheeled up at the full gallop, and fronted Cromwell's ironsides at a mile's distance on the open plain.

stantly, amid the blare of trumpets and the exulting shouts "God save the King!" of the brave gentlemen who mustered under it, the royal standard, with its gorgeous quarterings, was displayed to the light breeze, which bore its folds to their full length, and shook them toward the squadrons of its unrelenting foes.

At the same moment, from the midst of the dark masses of the puritans, coldly arrayed in buff and plain gray steel, with neither scarf, nor plume, nor lace of silver or of gold, to break the dull monotony of their appearance, was hoisted the blue banner of the covenant, bearing St. George's cross of red, but not yet intersected by the white diagonals of Scotland's patron saint. The elevation of this broad dark-coloured sheet was greeted by a stern and solemn acclamation, as different from the wild and animated clamour of the cavaliers, as is the deep incessant booming of the ocean surf, from the sharp, keen explosions of a thunder-storm.

Then followed a short pause—a fearful and

appalling interval of quiet, like the brief space that often intervenes between the mustering of the storm-clouds and the outbreaking of the hurricane. The faces of the bravest paled, and their pulses beat with a quickened and irregular motion, not from the slightest touch of fear, but from the intense violence of their excitement. Prayers were recited in this interval at the head of every regiment among the Parliamentarians, and many of the officers—and not a few even of the private troopers—men whom the spirit of the Lord had blessed with the high gift of expounding mysteries—held forth in their wild jargon, savouring to the ears of Edgar rather of blasphemous and profane phrensy, than of devotion or well-ordered piety.

It was at this conjuncture, just as Cromwell

time with voice and gesture—that the same group of officers which had displayed the royal standard galloped in full career along the whole front of the cavaliers midway between the armies.

The leading officer, as Edgar gazed upon him through his perspective glass, was a tall, strongly-built, and splendidly-accoutred man, superbly mounted on a jet black barb of the tall breed of Dongola—his cuirass literally blazed with stars and decorations of a dozen military orders, his mantle of dark purple velvet fringed and laid down with lace of gold three inches broad, displayed the diamond insignia of the garter, and his high-crowned Spanish hat was overshadowed by an ostrich plume nearly two feet in height. Yet were his features coarse and ill-favoured, marked with a supercilious sneer, and an expression ill-humoured, haughty, and imperious. His hair, which flowed far down his shoulders, was harsh and quite uncurled. His figure too, though tall and powerful, was

graceless—his body corpulent and gross, be-
traying symptoms of debauchery and lice[illegible]ce,
as plainly as his countenance reflected a m[illegible]nd
despotic, brutal, and self-willed.

The most profound respect attended this p[illegible]r-
son's swift passage through the lines, and e[illegible]er
and anon some change of station, or some d[illegible]i-
cate manœuvre was executed on his biddi[illegible]g.
But when he reached the extreme right of t[illegible]e
Royalists, he paused some time in deep a[illegible]d
earnest contemplation of the post occupied [illegible]y

Edgar had from the first concluded that this
ler was no other than the impetuous and
ing Rupert; but had he doubted it, the bit-
imprecations and fierce shouts of the excited
itans, to whom his cruelty and his successes
l rendered him an object of especial hatred,
st have at once convinced him. But he had
le time for observation, for Rupert, in his
acious reconnoissance, had, as it seemed,
calculated his own distance from Frizell's
tch dragoons, or overlooked the ditch which
obliquely from their station to within a few
ds of the elevation he had chosen, as com-
ding much of the parliament's position—an
sight which escaped not that experienced
er. A dozen of his men, as the prince
ed, had dismounted from their horses, and
their arquebuses ready, and their matches
ted, stole on from bush to bush behind the
s, unseen and unsuspected by the engrossed
anxious leader, till within short carabine

distance; then, flash after flash, their scattering fire burst from the willow bushes and the tufts of flags that lined the water-course; and, ere the sharp reports had reached the ears of Ardenne, one of the prince's followers leaped up in his saddle, and fell dead at his general's feet, while the perspective glass dashed from his fingers, and the white plume severed by another bullet, showed how well-aimed and narrowly-escaped had been the volley destined for Rupert's person.

The charger of the fallen trooper dashed masterless across the field, followed with nearly equal speed by the surviving soldier, who halted not, till he had reached his comrades. But he, whose life was aimed at more peculiarly, did not [redacted] ward the enemy, whose fire

goons, who had reloaded and were now in open view preparing for a second shot, and trotted leisurely away toward his chosen horsemen.

Scarce had this passed, ere Edgar's notice was attracted by the raised voice of Cromwell on whom he had been hitherto in close attendance, but who had ridden a short space to the left, to give some orders to the colonel of one of his own regiments. His words were lost to Ardenne from the distance, but by the short stern intonation of his accents he knew that something was amiss, and cantered up to him at once. The officer, whom Cromwell had addressed, was sitting motionless before his regiment, his bridle loose upon his charger's neck, his open hands raised upward, his dull and heavy features lighted up with a phrensied glare, and his voice rolling forth sentence after sentence of unconnected texts, strung as it were together by a running commentary of his own ill-digested ravings.

"Heard you me not?—Ho! Colonel Obadiah Jepherson!" shouted the general close in his

ear, his features kindling and his voice quivering with rage. "Heard you me not command you straightway to despatch six troops to bring up fascines, that, when we list advance, we may have wherewithal to cross the ditch?—Heard you not—or do you dare to disobey me?"

"Must I not then?" replied the other in a drawling tone; "as Balak said to Balaam, 'Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put into my mouth?'" and, turning toward the troopers, he again went on; "Wherefore be ye, as those, O brethren, whom the Lord set apart to Gideon——"

But not for many words did he continue his oration, for plunging both his spurs up to the [redacted] into his mighty charger, and pluck- [redacted] Oliver dashed

pressed the muzzle of his weapon to his temples, with such violence that, when the pistol was withdrawn, a livid ring remained on the indented and discoloured flesh.

"Now by the Lord that liveth," he hissed between his set teeth, but in a whisper so emphatic and distinct that all around him heard it, "if you but wink an eyelid, much less speak, or move, to disobey me, it were better for thee thou hadst never been born! Away! and do my bidding, dog, or you shall die the death!"

And, as he spoke, he shook him off so suddenly, that he had wellnigh lost his saddle, as he turned hastily away, to set about his duty with as much alacrity as though he did so of his own free will.

At this moment a loud sharp roar told that the action had commenced, and riding once more to his station, Edgar beheld a snow-white cloud surge slowly up toward the royal left—a bright flash followed—another burst of dense and solid smoke — another sharp explosion! — and then,

each after each they woke the cannon of the cavaliers, till their whole front was veiled in wreathed smoke, drifting toward the parliament's array, and filling all the intermediate space, as with a palpable and massive substance;—while the continuous and deafening roar precluded for a while the possibility of hearing, and almost of thought.

Anon the answering ordnance of the puritans belched forth its flame and smoke, and added its din to the awful uproar. At times, when the

and among all, and over all, the thundering accents of that most potent of all vocal instruments, the voice of man, pealed upward to the heavens.

A long half-hour elapsed, and they might hear the battle raging at every instant fiercer toward their right, yet they remained still unengaged themselves, and without tidings or directions how to act.

"By heaven!" cried Ardenne, as he caught the distant glitter of the royal standards floating among the smoke almost within the puritan position; "By heaven, our right must be repulsed!" and, as he spoke, an aide-de-camp dashed up wounded and ghastly from the right, and as he reined his charger up the gallant brute fell lifeless under him.

"Fairfax is beaten back, and all our right wing scattered," he exclaimed as he arose.

"Silence, man!" Cromwell sternly interrupted him. "Wouldst thou dismay all these? Say

on, but here apart, and not above your breath, an you would live to speak it out!—Say on!"

"Fairfax is beaten utterly, and all the right wing broken; you may not find two score of it together. As he charged through yon accursed lane, the musketry of Belial mowed his ranks, like grass before the scythe; and lo! the sons of Zerruiah—"

"Tush! tell me not of Belial and of Zerruiah! or, by the life of the Eternal, I will smite thee with my truncheon! Speak out in plain blunt

routed past redemption. Lucas, and Porter, and the malignant Goring, are playing havoc on the flank of our best Scottish foot, and Newcastle, with all his whitecoats, is winning way in front at the pike's point—"

"What message from the general? Quick sir," cried Cromwell, "quick!"

"That you draw out with all despatch, and charge Prince Rupert!"

"Why said you not so sooner?" Oliver replied. "Thou, Righteous Lambert, ride to Jepherson, bid him advance with the fascines, and fill yon ditch! Hutton and Barnaby, off with you to the first and second regiments; we will advance and cross the drain at a brisk trot, and—Ha! their ordnance ceases on the left; Rupert will meet us straightway!—Forward!—Advance! Ardenne, be near me, thou! Forward!—Sound trumpets!"

And at a quick trot they advanced, but in the deepest silence, save for the clashing of their

armour, and the earth-shaking clatter of their hoofs.

"Ha!" Oliver exclaimed again, as a quick spattering volley on their left was heard distinctly, though the smoke-wreaths were too closely packed to suffer objects to be seen above a spear's length distant; "there goes the musketry of Frizell—and now we clear the smoke!"

And even with the words they passed the ditch, which was filled level with the surface, just at the moment of reaching it; and, as they

reserve, could scarce maintain itself against the desperate odds with which it was engaged; though by the fast and rattling volleys, and the repeated charges of the pikemen, he judged that all was not yet over. The second glance showed him the prince in person, with the whole gallant cavalry of the left wing, advancing at full trot to charge him, with scarce five hundred yards between them; while a strong mass of pikemen, intent on turning the extreme left of the Scottish centre, had advanced so far beyond their horse as to expose a portion of their own right flank.

"Ardenne!" he shouted, with a voice clear as a trumpet, "away! a flying charge upon the flank of yon pike-regiment—ride over them, wheel promptly, and fall in upon the left flank of Prince Rupert! Ruxton, ride thou to Frizell, and tell him not to charge, but to deploy and to maintain his fire—for life! for life! Now for the work!—Gallop!—Ho! charge!—Down

with the sons of Zeruiah!—Ha! ha! the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon!"

An instant was enough; his messengers rode like the wind; and with a mighty shout, that rose above the thousand fearful sounds that mingled to make up the thundrous voice of battle, the ironsides plunged headlong on the advancing cavaliers. Five thousand horse at least on either side, splendid in all the vain equipments that cast a false and fleeting light of glory over the ghastly face of havoc! On they went—man to man, and horse to horse—panting for bloodshed, as for the breath of life—drunk with excitement—thoughtless of all except the present! The trumpets of the

like madmen, rather than cool and steady veterans—together with the slight confusion which always must be felt by an assailing party, which in the very moment of attack is suddenly assailed—would have gone hard against the cavaliers; but when to this was added the continual and well-aimed fire of Frizell's Scotch dragoons, cutting down horse and man along their flank by hundreds; and when the fresh and gallant regiment of Ardenne (which, having fallen at an oblique tangent on the right flank of the pikemen, and driven through them like a thunderbolt with an unbroken front) had wheeled, without a second's pause, above the dead and dying as orderly as on parade, and charged full on the naked left of Rupert's cavalry—it was no wonder that they were cast into complete and irretrievable disorder.

For some time all was close and deadly conflict; for such was the ecstatic valour of the gentlemen who battled for the crown, and such the rash and stubborn daring of their leader,

that they persisted still—rallying in squadrons, or in troops—when their whole line was broken and confused; and still, when these were routed, rushed on in desperate knots of ten or twelve against the victors, and dealt them death on every hand with pistol, carabine-but, and broad-sword.

Five times at least did Rupert rally his own regiment, and bring it up to be again repulsed; and in the last charge, singling Ardenne out, whose prowess he had noticed in the *mêlée*, he drove his horse against him, and smote him such a blow as shivered the tried rapier, which he raised to guard it, to the hilt, and falling thence with scarce abated violence upon his morion, cleft it down to the hair, but deadened

execution; while Cromwell drew off and reformed his troops, bearing the prince and all his bravest backward, pushing his squadrons, utterly defeated, clear off the field, and chasing them with fearful havoc to the very walls of York.

A little interval ensued, while they called off their stragglers, eager for vengeance, and scattered by the *mêlée;* but, ere ten minutes had elapsed, the ironsides, though thinned in number, and above half of them wounded, were under their own colours, and in their regular ranks. Ten minutes more flew by, and nothing was yet done; they kept the ground with not a foe before them, while on their right the enemy's whole infantry, whose flank by the defeat of Rupert was open to their charge, was gradually pushing back their own foot, step by step at the pike's point, from their position.

Amazed at this delay, and fearing some mishap, Ardenne intrusted his command to his lieutenant, and, mounting a fresh horse, gal-

loped away in search of Cromwell, whom he found bleeding fast from two wounds, both above his shoulders; one in the neck, a graze, as it was said, by a chance pistol-shot from his own men; the other a smart sword-cut on the collar-bone. He was evidently faint, and failing from the loss of blood.

"A surgeon—ho!" cried Edgar; "bear him away to the rear!"

"Not for the world!" cried Oliver, in a low voice but stern. "Shall I go, while the Lord has need of me? Form to the right, brave

swered Ardenne. "Each regiment form open
lumn to the right by troops, and charge all
the flank of yon dense mass of musketeers
d pikemen! Thou, Jepherson, wheel round
n the rear of yon brigade of whitecoats.
ou, Desborough, cut thy way through yonder
emen. Sound trumpets! forward all!"
nd on they went, with nothing to oppose or
d before them. Regiment after regiment,
n in flank or rear, were cut down, trampled
er foot, slashed out of the very shape and
blance of humanity.
ut now they reached the whitecoats, New-
le's own brigade of musketeers and pike-
mingled, four thousand strong, picked
, flushed with success, and valiant. Well
it then that Ardenne had wheeled Jepher-
upon their rear; for, as he came upon their
, while they were fighting hard in front
the Scotch infantry, they formed a second
with admirable skill, and opened on him
a fire from their second and rear ranks, as

emptied wellnigh half his saddles; while their pikes presented an impenetrable rampart against his gallant horses.

With difficulty he rallied his own regiment, and brought it up again to the charge, and at the selfsame instant Jepherson burst upon their rear. Assailed upon three sides at once, they broke; but fought it out even then, standing in small groups back to back, refusing quarter to the last, and lying in their lines when dead as they had fought while living! Oh!

nts, moved steadily and promptly up, ng the advantage gained by the gallant es; and, pressing on the scattered parties Royalists with such relentless zeal, that ould never rally till they reached the walls k—whole squadrons pushed into the Ouse rowned in its deep waters, or pitilessly tered on its banks.

cavalry, with Ardenne at their head, hile still drove right onward; and, won- to tell, traversed the whole position of iemy, from end to end, in perfect and ten order, sweeping the relics of that ous fight before them, as the surf drives eck, which its own violence has made, its foamy waters. These having reached rthest royal left, they wheeled once more right, and actually occupied the very d which Lucas with his cavaliers had held beginning of the action.

only enemy now left upon the field con- of these same victors, who, having con-

quered Fairfax and his tumultuary levies, had pressed with much success upon the flank of Manchester's and Lindsey's regiments of foot; till those stout squadrons, when relieved by Edgar's overwhelming charge upon their enemies in front, found leisure to concentrate all their efforts against the cavalry which had so nigh defeated them; and were in turn repulsing them, when, on the very spot where they had first so roughly handled Fairfax and his northern horse, Ardenne fell on them unawares, and well avenged his comrades.

In this last conflict the ground was broken with steep banks and scattered bushes, and the deep channel of the drain alluded to above. There, as before, the fight was obstinate, and

ieee for a moment threw Edgar's force into sorder, but unsupported and too weak in umbers, they fell fast, and at the last drew ff—their leader fighting desperately to cover heir retreat, till a shot struck his charger, and, s he rolled upon the gory and hoof-dinted sod, a savage fanatic shortened his sword to stab the prostrate rider.

Edgar's eye caught a glimpse of the gray hairs, and noble features that were now disclosed, bloodstained and ghastly, by the falling of his battered morion. With a fierce cry, he bounded from his horse—he was—he was in ime! — He struck one rapier up, received nother, which he could not parry, in his own vord arm—but he had saved his father!

It was not he alone, however, who had perived Sir Henry's peril:—a desperate rally of s followers was made to rescue him. The le of fight had rolled away after the flying valiers of Lucas; and in an instant, ere he uld strike a blow, or shout his war-cry,

Ardenne, second to Cromwell only as the wi
of that bloody day, was made a captive,
borne off at a gallop by the flyers from
very field, on which his conduct and his v
had retrieved the fortunes of his party, wh
the very verge of absolute annihilation.

CHAPTER VI.

Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,
It should be thus with him—he must die to-morrow.

Measure for Measure.

The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground.
Nearer it came and yet more near,
The very headsmen paused to hear.

Scott's *Roksby.*

It was already past the middle of the night which followed the tremendous conflict upon Marston Moor, yet many a light was glancing through the casements of the adjoining village,

in which the cavalry of the victorious army had taken up its quarters. Strange and discordant noises echoed among the low-browed cottages—the stamp and scream of vicious chargers, the clash of arms, the din of the artillery waggons groaning and creaking over the ill-made roads, the moans and outcries of the wounded wretches, waked to fresh agonies by the rough motion of the carts, which bore them from the field, watering the dust beneath their wheels with human gore—and yet, though every house and

songs of profane triumph were bellowed from the hostelries wherein the men were billeted, no yells of savage laughter, nor female shrieks broke forth to tell of warlike licence; in short the aspect of the hamlet was rather that of some immense conventicle of armed enthusiasts, than of the nightly quarter of a triumphant host fresh from the shock, the rapture, and the glory of the battle.

Before one dwelling of pretensions somewhat greater than its neighbours, having a little court-yard with a low stone-wall before it, and a grotesquely-sculptured porch of native sand-stone, there sat two mounted privates of the ironsides, one on each side the gate, so still and motionless that, but for the occasional tossing of their chargers' heads, or whisk of their long tails, they might have passed for lifeless statues. The pale beams of the moon slept placidly upon their morions and breastplates, while the bright scarlet of their doublets was mellowed by the partial light into a dimmer and more sober hue.

Within the court two more of the same sturdy corps walked to and fro with ported carbines, crossing each other at brief intervals, the red sparks of their lighted matches showing their readiness for instant service. Within the house all were at rest save in one chamber, opening directly from the narrow hall or passage, whence might be heard, even without the walls, a heavy and irregular footstep clanging with military spurs upon the flagstones which composed the cottage floor, and now and then the suppressed murmur of a voice communing as it seemed with the deep thoughts of the speaker.

It was a large low-roofed and stone-paved room, with heavy rafters and a huge open chimney of black oak, dingy and mantled with the smoke of ages. A wide low window, divided

superior workmanship, with a high panelled back and elbows, was disposed so as to shield the occupants from the keen blasts that found their way in winter through many a crevice of the time-shaken walls. Over this antique piece of furniture a scarlet dragoon-cloak was flung at random, with a broad-brimmed and high-crowned hat of dark gray felt, hooked on one of the knobs which decorated its extremities, while from the other hung a buff belt with a long iron-hilted tuck.

Upon a table close before the hearth, on which a dozen fast-decaying brands silently smouldered, stood with its wick tall and unsnuffed a solitary lamp, casting a feeble and uncertain light about the room, which served however to display a brace of horseman's heavy pistols, an open map, a telescope, a worn and greasy bible, and a leader's truncheon lying beside it on the board, as well as a confused assemblage of steel armour piled in a large

armed chair and glancing with obscure reflec-
tions from the shadow of a distant corner.

It was, however, the inmate of the chamber
that lent its chief attraction to the scene—a
strong-built and stern-featured man, clad in a
military suit of buff, such as was then worn
under the corslet and thigh-pieces of the
cavalry; his cumbersome jack-boots were still
about his legs, garnished with spurs as when
he left the saddle, though all his other armour

uttered inward key, striding the while with heavy but uneven steps, now fast, now slow, across the echoing floor, his hands were now crossed firmly on his breast, now tossed aloft as if they brandished the war-weapon, and now they griped each other with so stern a pressure that it almost seemed as if the blood would start from beneath his nails. It might be that the fever of his wounds had terminated for the moment to his brain, it might be that a darker fit than common of his fanatic hypochondriasm had occupied his mind, but on this night the wise and crafty conqueror of Rupert resembled rather the mysterious *energumenos*, the possessed, fiend-tortured, maniac of holy writ, than the cool, self-controlling, scientific leader he had that day approved himself.

"King?—King?" at last he exclaimed audibly, pausing from his uneasy walk, with an expression of uncertainty and even terror distinctly marked in every feature. "Didst thou say King?—No! no! not King!—Avaunt, Beelzebub!—Get thee behind me, Sathanas!—

It said not, 'King!' that solemn and tremendous shape, that drew the curtains of my boyish couch at the unhallowed hour of midnight—'The greatest one in England, but not King!'—Ho! have I foiled thee there?—Ha ha!—well art thou called the prince of liars—get thee behind me! tempt me no more!—away foul slave! By the Lord's help I spit at and defy thee!"

He took two or three turns across the room more quickly than before, and again pausing cried, "A trick of fantasy?—who saith it was unreal—have we not ears to hear, and eyes to see; and shall we not believe what we do hear and see?—Did not a spirit pass before the face of Job, that the hair of his flesh stood up—Stood it not still—yet he could not dis-

and he heard a voice?—And came it not to pass
o likewise unto me, and much more also?—
gain: Did not the evil-minded Saul call up,
hrough her at Endor, the living spirit of the
eparted prophet, that it did prophecy to him?—
nd yet again: Did not the Roman Brutus,
olater although he was and heathen, hold
nverse with the shadow of his kingly victim,
at was his evil genius at Philippi?—And may
t I—I, that was written down before the world
gan—I, that have been predestinate of old to
cute the wrath of the Most Highest, and
s the wine-press of his vengeance—may not
o commune with disembodied ministers that
k in the night season? Go to! go to! I heard its
hty accents as I started from my slumber,
they yet tingle in my fleshly ears—'Arouse
, thou that shalt be first in England!'—
not—it said *not*—King!"

gain he took a short and hurried turn
ugh the apartments—"And if it had," he
d in higher tones,—"and if it had said King?

—Be there not lying spirits — be there not tempters—be there not false prophets?—Had it said King, then had I roused myself indeed! Then had I striven with the evil one, that he had fled me! for to the putting down, not to the raising up of tyrants was I called—not that to me men should bow down the knee, and wallow in the dust, and cry, Hail King! but that throughout this goodly realm of England there should be innocence, and righteousness, and peace, and liberty, and truth for ever!"

He paused again in his soliloquy, and as he paused the challenge of a distant sentinel rang sharp and clear through the still night—the clatter of a horse's hoofs—another challenge,

resumed the studies whence he had probably been hurried by the ferment of his distempered spirits.

The outer door was opened, and several persons, after a moment's parley with the sentinel on duty, entered the house—a heavy hand rapped quickly on the door, followed by a blunt voice—"The captain of the watch to speak with General Cromwell."

"Enter, the captain of the watch," cried Oliver, and, as the well-known face of an approved and trusty comrade met his eye—"What now, good Kingsland!" he exclaimed. "How goes it with the host?"

"All thanks be to the Giver of all mercies—well!" replied the officer; "but here is one without—yea even one from the strong hold of the malignants—seeking to parley with you."

"One from the town of York—Ha?" answered Cromwell with the speed of thought. "Admit him instantly."

"Nay! not from York," returned the other;

"nor is it any *he*. Of a verity it is a damsel, yea! and a damsel decked with the comeliness—truly I say with the loveliness of the flesh!"

"Tush! tell not me of comeliness!" cried Oliver very sharply. "Of God's truth, Ahaziah Kingsland, thou art a fool, thus to disturb my meditations for a most frail and painted potsherd—a Dalilah, I warrant me—a Rechab, yea, and a painted Jezabel—a harlot from the camp of the Egyptians—cast her forth straightway!—leave me, I say—begone!"

the night air is chill, though it be summer—and lights and wine, I say, and creature comforts, such as may fit the tender and the delicate of women!"

The words were yet upon the lips of Cromwell when a tall female figure, marked by that indescribable yet not to be mistaken air of grace which is seen rarely but in persons conscious of the possession of high station and pre-eminent endowments, was ushered into the dim-lighted chamber. The coarse dark-coloured riding-cloak, wrapped closely round her form, could not entirely conceal the elegant proportions, which it was evidently intended to disguise; and still less could the wide-leafed hat of country straw, tied closely down upon the cheeks by a silk kerchief, mask the aristocratic mould of the fair features, or hide the rich luxuriance of the light-brown hair, which hung uncurled and damp with the night-dews far down upon her shoulders.

A slight bustle occurred, while the general

with his attendant officers, tendered her in dumb show the courtesies demanded by her apparent rank and yet more by her isolated and defenceless situation; but with an air of quiet dignity she waved off their attentions, and expressed more by her manner than her words a wish to be left alone with the far-dreaded leaguer of the independents.

Meanwhile more logs had been heaped on the hearth, and now threw up a flickering and lively glow which, added to the lustre of some three or four fresh lights, diffused itself into the furthest angles of the room. The serving-men and his subordinates withdrew, Oliver sternly ordering them to hold themselves aloof, and pray to be delivered from the sin of eaves-

and perfectly composed—there was no flutter of her pulse, no tremour of her frame, no doubt or hesitation in the clear cold glance of her expressive eye—all was calm, self-confiding, resolute, and fearless.

"I have come hither," she said, without waiting to be first addressed, in a voice slow and passionless, yet exquisitely musical,—"I have come hither, General Cromwell, in a fashion men will deem unmaidenly, and women bold unto effrontery. I have come hither under the shade of night, alone save with the company of menials, unto the foeman of my family —my King—my country! yet dare not even in your most inward soul to deem me light or frail. I have come, I say, hither, casting aside all prejudice, all fear, and all reserve—defying the opinion of the world—incurring the contempt, the hatred, and perhaps the curse, of those I I hold most dear. Yet have I come, upheld by mine own conscience, and firm in the resolve to hinder a foul crime.—All other means have

failed—tears, arguments, entreaties! All!—all, I say, save this. Get you instantly," she went on, rising as she spoke into strong energy—"to horse!—to horse! to horse! if you would save your friend, your fellow-soldier, your preserver—alas that he was such!—if you would save Edgar Ardenne!—He is a captive of the cavaliers, sentenced to die at daybreak."

"To die—" vehemently interrupted Cromwell—"To die!—they dare not—no, for their souls, they dare not!—Did they but harm one hair of him, I would hang fifty of their best and noblest, higher than ever Haman swung in the

him, who would have died to save you! Despise my warning, and to-morrow you may perchance —avenge him!"

With a fixed scrutinizing glance the general gazed upon her features while she spoke, as though he would peruse her soul.

"And who—" he said at length, "and who are you, that speak thus resolutely, act thus boldly in behalf of him who is the foeman of your tribe—even the stout and valiant Ardenne?"

"It matters not," she answered steadily,—"it matters not who I may be, or what.—It matters only that you subscribe to my conditions, and get you straight to horse."

"Thus far it matters only," answered Cromwell—"that an I know you not, yea! and moreover know your motives likewise, I stir not —horse nor man! There be enow of dames and demoiselles among you who would deem falsehood very righteous truth, if so ye might entrap unto destruction one who—although

himself he saith it—hath been and will be a keen instrument—yea! a two-edged sword, to work destruction on the sons of Belial!"

"Not so! not so!" she broke upon his speech with striking energy. "Not so—by all my hopes of heaven!—Such may be thy creed, to do ill that good may come of it. But I—I would not stoop to falsehood, were it to buy the lives of thousands such as thou art!—my aim—my only aim—is to preserve the young from a most cruel and heart-rending doom—to save the aged from a most deadly crime. I am

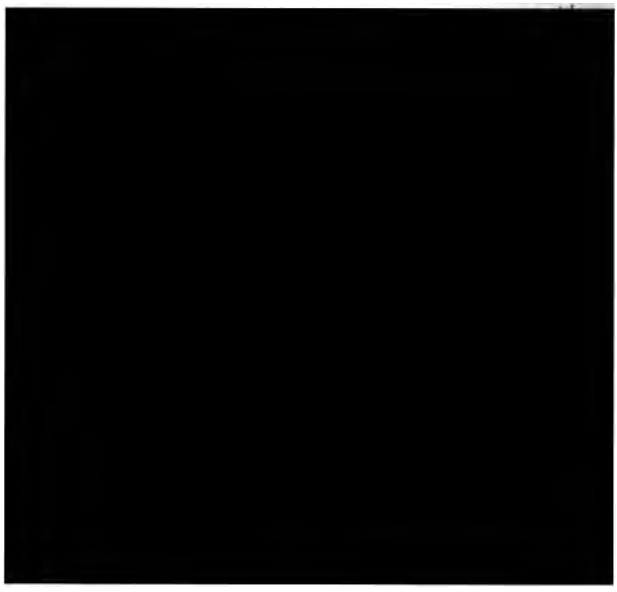
heart, strong of hand, tender of conscience—yea! a burning and a shining light to men—and so thou wouldst preserve him—and wouldst wed with him—ha! is it not so?—and win him to the faction of the man Charles Stuart!—preserve his life, so to destroy his soul! Is it not so?—Ha! have I read your heart?"

"You have *not!*" she answered, with calm dignity. "You have *not* read it; nor can you so much as conjecture or imagine the motives or the thoughts of such as I, more than you can comprehend the sacred truths which you misquote, perverting them to your own ruin. Know, General Cromwell, that not to be the empress of the universe—not to restore my sovereign to his lawful throne—my country to its ancient peace—would I espouse the man who, whether from misapprehended duty or from wilful crime, could band himself with persons like to thee—lending himself a willing tool to be played off by rebels to their monarch—traitors to their country—and—alas! that I should live to say

it — vile hypocrites before their God! It is for this—for this that I would have him live, that *he* may not lack season for repentance; and that his miserable father may be spared the sin of slaying his own son!"

"His father!" shouted Cromwell, excited now beyond all self-restraint. "His father! In God's name, speak out, maiden! His father! Merciful Lord! What meanest thou?"

"He is a captive to Sir Henry Ardenne," she replied; "made captive in the very action of



Lord, and by your hopes of an hereafter, that you will shed no drop of blood which is not absolutely needful to his safety; and more, that he once safe, you will strike no blow further, but return straightway to this spot, molesting no man, nor taking any note of their position or proceedings against whom I shall lead you, for twelve hours' space!"

"Tush! tush! it may not be. Say quickly where they lie, and what their numbers, so shall we save your lover; but dally not, I pray you, lest we may be too late to save!"

"Promise!" she answered, steadily.

"Dally not, maiden! I say dally not!" Cromwell repeated very sternly; "else shall the blood of him thou lovest, and not that only, but the guilt of the insane old homicide rest on your head, who might have saved them, but wouldst not!"

"Promise, or not a word from me! Promise, or I go hence, and Heaven befriend whom thou desertest to destruction!"

"It may not be, I say—it may not be!" he cried, gnashing his teeth, and stamping violently on the floor, in a fierce paroxysm of unbridled rage. "Speak quickly, girl, and truly; or instantly I cast thee into bonds! Without there, ho! a guard and fetters!"

"Promise, or you may tear me limb from limb—ay, draw me with wild horses, yet shalt thou nothing learn! Promise, and I tell all!"

The guard rushed in—grim, gloomy-looking fanatics, to whom their leader's merest nod was

mournful voice, "and nothing will remain of him you *call* your friend, except a little blood-stained clay, which you may, or may not, avenge!"

The muscles of the general's mouth worked violently, his clenched hand gradually opened, the expression of his eye grew softer.

"Noble heart!" he muttered. "Well hath the prophet spoken 'a virtuous woman is beyond the price of rubies!'"

Then, raising his voice, he said distinctly and aloud—"Before the Lord, my Judge and my Redeemer, and by my hopes of grace, I promise thee "It shall be done as thou wouldst have it. How many, and where lie they?"

"Three hundred horse—in the small town of Wetherby-on-Wharfe."

"Sound trumpets—boot and saddle! Mine own first ironsides to horse; let them all carry petronels. Despatch! despatch! Saddle me Thunder for the field—I will myself to horse! Find me three trusty guides that know each

yard of country for ten miles around! For life! for life! no tarrying!"

Forth rushed the subalterns—the trumpets flourished, piercingly shrill and stirring—then came the clash of arms, the trampling of quick feet, the glare of torches, the din of confused voices, the pawing and the snort of chargers, and all the thrilling sounds and sights of an alarum at the dead of night.

"One more word, maiden," he exclaimed, while fastening the rivets of his corslet with an

ssed. I must be home before you, else
l fail."

ay, thou art right in all things," Crom-
nswered; "and as thou willest it shall be.
land, conduct the maiden in all honour to
rn attendants. Lady," he added, taking
y the hand with a benevolent expression
ıg his gloomy features, "lady, thou art a
y and a glorious creature; and this night
:hou done a deed worthy the noblest of
s daughters. A soldier's blessing, although
not of thy faith, nor of thy faction, can-
sgrace or harm thee. The God of Israel
thee then, and guide thy feet aright, and
thee peace and happiness and understand-
Farewell, and doubt not that I will deal
thee righteously; for if I fail thee, to
;ress my promise, may He whom I profess
ve—with frailty, it is true, and fainting,
ith sincere heart-zeal—do unto me so like-
ıt mine utmost need, and much more also!"
let fall her hand as suddenly as he had

taken it, and, as if half ashamed of the emotion he had shown, abruptly turned away, and scanned the map which lay upon the table with intense scrutiny; while Sibyl, wondering at the singular emotion and unexpected conduct of the hated independent, silently left the house to hurry homeward, with an easier heart than she had carried to the quarters of the puritans.

Before a half-hour had elapsed, five hundred chosen horsemen were under arms and in the saddle—the very flower of Cromwell's finest cavalry—and he himself, despite his wounds, his arm yet hanging in a sling, mounted, and at their head.

After a short and hurried conversation with

path whereby to reach the Wharfe, and ford it here, some mile or so below the town?"

"A half-mile further," answered the countryman, "a lane turns off to the left, down to the Flint-mill ford, two miles below the bridge.

"Ho! Captain Goodenough," cried Oliver, "take thou this fellow to the rear, and, as we pass the lane, turn down it with the last troop—tarry not on thy way, but cross the river, and keep the right bank up, until thou be within two gunshots of the bridge; there halt till that thou hear my trumpets, and then charge! Over the bridge—into the town—and strike straight for the market-place! If that ye be discovered, ere ye hear me, delay not, but dash straightway in. If that your guide deceive you, shoot him upon the instant. Be cautious, and be quick—away!"

On they went, quickening still their pace, and, as they passed the lane, the troop appointed to the duty wheeled off, steadily, but

without slackening its pace, and hurried on its route.

Another mile was passed, and once again the general halted. "Kingsland and Pearson," he cried, "move to the front; I would hold counsel with ye; and bring the other guides." Then as his officers arrived—"There be," he said, "two other roads, beside this which we follow, that enter Wetherby this side the river—the great north road from Boroughbridge, and one from Knaresborough, yet further to the west.

when ye have reached the roads. Ye have but a scant hour to do it, but that is time enow, an ye employ it diligently. By then the moon will set, and we shall have it dark and misty. Be wary, and success is certain. God speed ye, gentlemen—away!"

Off they rode across the open fields which stretched, at that time without fences or enclosures, except a few small drains, for many miles over that fertile district.

An hour passed slowly over, and the moon sunk, as Cromwell had predicted, into a heavy bed of clouds, yet he moved not. His men were drawn up, all dismounted, but each trooper by his horse, in a small piece of marshy woodland, open to the road, where they could not have been discovered by a chance passenger.

The morning grew not lighter yet, for a small drizzling rain began to fall, with a dense fog, rendering objects scarcely visible at ten feet distant. Another half-hour passed, and yet no tidings.

"Mount, ho! and blow your matches," exclaimed Cromwell, breaking the silence which had so long remained uninterrupted by any human sound or whisper. "We must fall on, else shall we too late—trusting to fortune and the favour of the Lord that our friends be at their posts. Wheel to the left. Ho! forward, trot!"

He put his horse at once into his swiftest pace; but, just as he moved his men, the clang

reached the town, the lights of which they might see feebly twinkling through the mist-wreaths. An awful sound broke on their ears, heard fearfully distinct above the din of hoofs and clash of spur and scabbard—it was the first note of the death-bell!

"Gallop! Ho! Gallop!" Cromwell shrieked out in piercing tones that thrilled to every heart, plunging his spurs up to the rowel-heads into his charger's side—but his command reached other ears than those of his stout followers.

"Stand, or I shoot!" challenged a drowsy sentinel, whom they had wellnigh passed unnoticed despite the clatter of their march; and at the selfsame point of time his musket was discharged; but its report was drowned by the heart-thrilling flourish of the trumpets, and the repeated war-cry of the charging zealots.

On every side the trumpets of the general were answered by the simultaneous shouts of the three bands he had detached, by the quick

clatter of their horses' hoofs, and the sh
ringing volleys of their carbines. On every
the outposts were cut down, and the t
entered sword in hand. The death-bell ce
to toll—the ringers had deserted it in terro
The bugles pealed, and the drums beat to
but it was all too late. The few who we
foot, were instantly cut down;—others
rushing from their quarters half-attired,
lighted torches and unbelted brands, o
gaze in mute and unresisting terror on the

execution—mounted upon a ready charger, and girt round by a ring of swords, that set the very hope of rescue at defiance!

One short note of the bugle, and every torch expired as suddenly as it had been illumed!—Another—and the strangers fell into column with the speed of thought, and filing off at a hard trot were out of sight so rapidly, that but for the dismantled gates, the empty dungeon, the decaying brands that smouldered on the ground, and the few scattered bodies outstretched upon the miry pavements never to rise again, all that had passed might have been almost deemed a wild and baseless dream.

CHAPTER VII.

[redacted]

e generals of the commonwealth been equals
irit, energy, and firm devotion to their
, of the true victors on that bloody day—
ax and Cromwell. But, in truth, during
ears which had elapsed since the uplifting
e royal standard, the aspect of affairs in
and had been changed greatly for the
e, and men's opinions had undergone, if
ble, a greater alteration.

ich party, as is the natural consequence of
sition, whether in argument or armed strife,
but become more desperately wedded to its
principles or prejudices. The King, though
ad gained no single step toward a general
t of conquest or pacification, was more re-
d than ever to come to no terms, save such
e could never reasonably even hope to gain
his rebellious subjects.

he people, meanwhile, were becoming weary
he war, and all the miseries that follow in
ain, and seeing that there was no hope that
rles would ever listen either to prudence or

to reason, until reduced to infinite extremities, were daily—hourly—increasing in their animosity to him, and in their readiness to urge on and promote, by every method in their power, the interest of his enemies.

The nobles, on the other hand, those even who had been the first and the most zealous to proclaim themselves adherents to the parliament and constitution—the first to buckle on the arms of legalized and just rebellion—perceiving now,

e of that bloody field, the gallant Newcastle,
ly incensed at Rupert's furious and unman-
d rashness, by which indeed the whole north
been set at stake and lost in one pitched
le, had thrown aside his arms, and crossed
seas to gratify, if it might be, in happier
ns, his taste for those accomplishments and
of peace which were far more congenial to
mproved and courtly intellect, than the rude
of camps and foughten fields.

he prince, without so much as an attempt
ally his dispersed and shattered forces, fled
all speed toward Chester, while York,
ved in vain, surrendered in a few days to
conquerors of Marston.

etter success, however, than could have been
cted, fell to the cavaliers in other portions
ıe realm. Charles, who, a few days pre-
s to the defeat of his rash nephew, had
ted Waller at Cropredy bridge, now follow-
ıp his slight advantage by a vigorous and
movement into Cornwall, pressed upon

Essex with such skill and perseverance, that the general of the parliament was forced to make a precipitate escape by sea. Hopeless of bringing off his army, he went on board with a few officers, having first sent away his horse, under command of Balfour, to cut their way, as best they might, to London; which (owing to the shameful revelry of Goring, who suffered them, although forewarned even of the hour when the sortie would be made), he most successfully accomplished; and leaving all his

hester's uncertain, if not dishonest, policy in bsolutely prohibiting the leader of the iron- ides from making one more charge on the re- ring cavaliers; when, as that officer asserted, complete victory must have undoubtedly been on by such a movement.

After this fruitless struggle, relieving the be- guered posts of Donnington and Basing- use, the King once more took up his quar- s for the winter in the loyal town of Oxford, h better hopes than he had entertained since complete subversion of his party in the th; on news of which his Queen had in- ntly escaped to France, and he himself had med it wise to send the Prince of Wales to stol with a separate council and an inde- ndant army, judging it hazardous to hold so eat a stake as their united safety embarked on a single venture.

Toward the dead of winter, the armies being th laid up, the puritanic leaders returned to estminster to take once more their part in the

proceedings of the Houses, since they had no more opportunity of active service in the field.

Matters in parliament looked wildly—parties ran higher now than they had done at any time even before the royalists seceded from the councils of the nation—the Presbyterians and the Independents striving, with rancorous and bitter energy, to gain the upper hand. Commissioners were, indeed, sent from both sides to treat for peace, as during the preceding winter, at Uxbridge; but rather to preserve appearances, than from

l, the stage in former days of so much
ty and pomp, but now all gloomy and de-
d by every living thing, except a few dis-
olate and dingy sparrows huddled together
he leafless branches of the elms, or twitter-
feebly in the wintry sunshine.

he dull and lonely scenery—the grass-plots
tled partially with crisp hoar-frost — the
canals sheeted with rotten and half-melted
-the rustic benches white with the slippery
—the big drops plashing down from off the
hern branches of the giant trees—and,
e all, the utter solitude—the absence of
human being—harmonized so well with
dark and almost misanthropic mood which
crept on the young soldier, that he con-
ed for above an hour to walk to and fro,
st unconscious of the flight of time.

e was at length, however, awakened from
everie by the approach of three men walk-
at a rapid pace toward him, apparently
ged in conversation of the strongest interest.

A single glance sufficed to let him recognise the persons of Ireton, Vane, and Cromwell. So deeply were these gentlemen engrossed in their discourse, that it was not till they were on the very point of meeting, that Cromwell knew his favourite officer. They did not even then, however, pause; but, with a courteous salutation, passed him, conversing rapidly in a low tone. After a few steps Oliver quitted his companions, and, turning short round, followed Edgar at so swift a pace, that he overtook him almost in-

rishing, that they shall overtop the goodly
at, and choke it down, and triumph over it.
lo! the time is now at hand. The Lord
a borne it in upon our hearts, that we shall
ge the field—that we shall purify the thrash-
floor, setting apart the good grain from the
al weeds—that so we may not die, but
!"

Of what change speak you, general?" re-
ed Ardenne, somewhat coldly; "for, to say
h, I may not comprehend you, while you
ak thus in parables."

May not, or *will* not—whether?" Oliver
ired, with a solemn sneer curling his lip,
he fixed his piercing eye upon the face of
enne so sternly, and so searchingly withal,
few men could have brooked his gaze with-
confusion. Then, seeing that the counten-
e of Edgar, though firm and fixed, was frank
open as the day, he deigned to speak di-
ly to the point.

"Why, see you not, he said, "that an these generals, these *lords*, continue—self-seekers as they be, not holding their eyes steady, and their hearts aright toward the public weal, but turning the right hand and the left, struggling ever for their own advancement, backsliding, wavering and fainting at the push of need—see you not that this war shall vex the realm long years, and that the man, Charles Stuart, must in the end prevail? For, lo you! even now those covenanting crafty Scots, whom may the Lord confound! are hankering, as the Israelites of old, after the flesh-pots of the heathen. I tell you, of a verity, if they might cast the net of their deceptions over this groaning land—even the foul abomination of an established Presbyterian church, sterner than prelacy, yea! more intolerant than papistry itself—they would desert us as

former place, and stablish him in all the might as he is steady in the will, to work upon our heads his ancient tyranny!"

"Something of this I have perceived," Ardenne replied, "and loath am I to own it even to mine inmost thoughts. But, on my conscience, I believe that Manchester and Essex wish not to see the parliament prevail too fully. Nay more, I grievously suspect the Scottish leaders, and have done so from the beginning. It may be that I wrong them, but I *do* hold that their only object from the first hath been to force the bigoted and iron discipline of their presbytery upon this kingdom, intolerant, inquisitorial, meddling, vexatious, and fanatical. Nor do I think that they would strike one blow for liberty, save in this rooted hope."

"You do not, Edgar Ardenne, you do not wrong them!" exclaimed Cromwell, joyously. "I do rejoice that you have read them rightly. And would you not do somewhat—somewhat to save our necks from this most bitter yoke of

spiritual bondage—to cast this burthen from our consciences—would you not venture somewhat?"

"Much, much!" cried Ardenne; "I would both do and venture deeply, if I could see the method, and the time!"

"Verily, I will show thee," answered the other. "To-morrow do we hold a solemn fast, and a soul-searching self-inquiry to the Lord, in all our congregations—and all our preachers shall exhort us—truly the Lord hath put one

Then shall we move before the Commons, Sir Harry Vane and I, a self-denying ordinance, whereby no member shall hold, any more, any commission in the armies of the land. So shall these stiff-necked nobles be forced to yield the sway they have so misemployed, and Fairfax, honest and trusty Fairfax, shall take the place of doubting Essex."

For a moment Ardenne pondered deeply, and it was now his turn to strive to read the countenance of his companion; but all was dark, mysterious, and inscrutable.

"Your scheme," he said at length, "is naught; for by this ordinance you must *yourself* resign your truncheon; and, I care not although I say it, I hold *you* the main pillar of our armies in the field. Your scheme is therefore naught — nor could it pass the Lords."

"The Lords!" said Oliver with a grim sneer. "Trouble yourself not for the Lords! Truly

the time hath come when they must do, even as the Commons bid them. And for the rest, truly there is a way."

"An *honest* way?" asked Edgar, sharply, "for to say truth, General Cromwell, I like not these by-paths of counsel—still less like I this calling upon holy names, this feigning inspiration, and forging miracles, this quoting and interpreting the word of God, to justify things politic and worldly!"

"Go to! go to!" cried Oliver, but with a dark and subtle smile. "Thou talkest as a babe —yea! as a very suckling that knoweth not [redacted] Know this—all things are [redacted] ends,

may retain our leading of the new-modelled host, and marshal it to glory."

"How so? I see it not," said Edgar, musingly, and wholly unconvinced by Cromwell's specious sophistry. "It must be most gross practice."

"Surely we may resign our sittings in the House," answered Oliver, very slowly, watching the effect of every word upon the face of Ardenne," if it be better for the people of the Lord that we continue with the army."

"And wherefore not they also?"

"Wherefore not?" interrupted Cromwell. "Wherefore, but because they being peers of England, their seats hereditary, their privileges indefeasible."—

"Well, sir," Edgar broke in upon him before his speech was half concluded—"I see your an—and I believe that you *mean* honestly. Nevertheless I like it not, and I will none of it. I love not devious counsels."

And will you then fall off?" inquired the

other evidently much annoyed. "Will *you*, that have performed such mighty deeds for the good cause, fighting the faithful fight for Israel, will you fall off to those whom you know wavering and fickle, if that they be not absolutely traitorous and false?"

"I will do nothing, Master Cromwell, on that you may rely,—I will do nothing," Edgar replied in quiet but stern tones, "that both my head and heart approve not. I may not in my conscience vote for this your measure; for

will devote my parts where most they may avail, to the ordering of my soldiery."

"Be it so!" answered Cromwell, somewhat relieved. "Be it so—since it may not be as I should deem for the better. But not the less shall we prevail in this thing, only hold thou my counsels secret."

"I am not wont," said Ardenne, not a little ruffled, "to fetch and carry—and, as I said before, I do believe that you mean honestly. To-morrow, then, I shall resign my seat, and straight go down to the army."

"Farewell then, till the springtide—and then, *then*, Edgar Ardenne, under command of the right gallant Fairfax, full early shalt thou see and own the wisdom of my measures. The next campaign—mark! mark, I say, my words—for they are of the Lord!—the next campaign shall be the last for Charles."

CHAPTER VIII.

By Him who cannot lie.

had predicted had indeed come to pass. After much fierce contention the self-denying ordinance although opposed to the utmost by Hollis, Glin, and Stapleton, and all the leaders of the Presbyterian faction, passed both the Houses; Fairfax was named chief general of the parliament, and by a series of intricate manœuvres, affairs were so arranged that Cromwell, still retaining his commission of Lieutenant-general, was not required even to resign his seat in the Commons.

It was an evil omen for the royal party that Laud, after remaining in confinement during four whole years in the tower, was now brought to his trial, condemned, and put to death by ordinance of parliament, having in vain produced a regular and ample pardon under the King's hand and seal. None, therefore, were surprised that, like all former efforts at a reconciliation, the treaty entered on at Uxbridge utterly failed in its results, the King on one side and the commissioners on the other exhibiting so much of haughtiness and unaccommodating spirit that,

unless by a miracle, no peace could have been possibly concluded.

So much time had elapsed in the debates at Westminster, and so late was it in the session ere the ordinance became a law, that the new model of the army was not accomplished till the spring was far advanced, and ere the Independents were prepared to take the field, Charles had already gained some trivial but encouraging successes. The town of Leicester had been

the capital of loyal principles, the King marched hastily with some eight thousand men hoping to raise the siege, and force the general to a battle ere he could be joined by Cromwell with his cavalry; but hearing, after he had advanced as far as Daventry, that Fairfax was so near him as Northampton, he the same day retreated upon Harborough, intending to fall back on Leicester, where he might draw more infantry from Newark to his banner and tarry the arrival of his northern reinforcements.

On the thirteenth of June the army of the parliament took up its quarters for the night about a mile to the south of the small town of Naseby, the ironsides, with Ardenne's regiment of horse, being a little in advance on the right wing of the position, and occupying a commanding station on a range of gentle eminences. It was a calm and lovely evening—so still and breathless that the smallest rural sounds—the lowing of the cattle from the rich pastures in the vale below—the bay of mastiffs from the scattered

granges—the hooting of the owls from many an ivy-mantled pollard—even the breeze-like murmur of the distant rivers were clearly audible in singular but pleasing contrast to the ruder sounds of the nocturnal camp. The moon in unveiled gorgeousness was hanging in a sky so perfectly transparent as is but rarely witnessed under the humid atmosphere of England, and millions of bright stars were flashing like diamond sparks in the unclouded firmament.

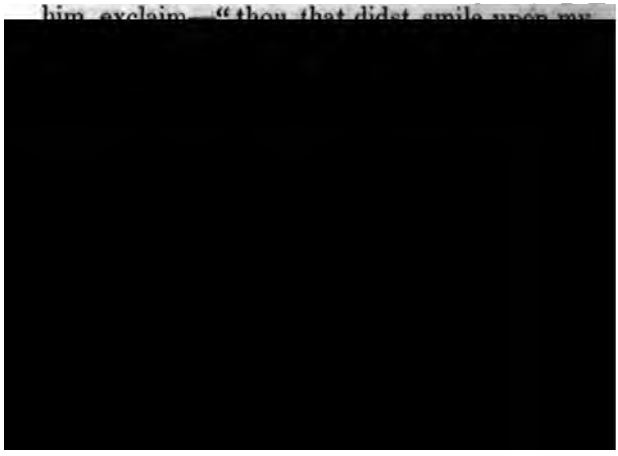
on the blue field of the covenant drooping around its staff, from which the gentle air had not the power to move it, easily showed him whither to direct his footsteps; but somewhat to his wonder, on reaching Cromwell's tent the sentinel on duty there informed him that the lieutenant-general had gone forth alone beyond the outposts of the army to wrestle with the Lord in prayer, even as holy Samuel went forth "to cry unto the Lord his God for Israel that he might save them out of the hands of the Philistines."

Anxious to see Cromwell before the morning, Edgar, inquiring of the sentinels, and of the scattered groups of soldiers who were engaged cooking their evening meal about the watch-fires, easily followed on his track; and at last, having proceeded some few hundred yards beyond the farthest outpost, discerned the figure of a man kneeling upon the open plain in the full moonlight, with both his arms outstretched toward Heaven. The clear light glanced upon the polished iron of his morion and breastplate,

and even more than this, the harsh tones of the speaker, as he sent up in vehement profusion his wild supplications, or remonstrances—for such they were in spirit—to the throne of grace, announced to him distinctly that he had found the object of his search.

Before Ardenne reached him, Oliver's prayer was ended; and, rising from his knees, he stood —his feet a little way apart, and planted with colossal strength upon the mossy sod—gazing with an air of calm enthusiasm upon the glistening heavens.

"And thou, bright ruler of my destinies"—thus Ardenne, to his deep astonishment, heard him exclaim—"thou that didst smile upon my



that, in afterdays, when, by the gracious mercy of that long-suffering and beneficent Lord, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live—my soul was touched of grace, and mine understanding enlightened to the sinfulness of my ways—wert seen to shoot forth scintillations, pure as the seven living lamps that burn before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God—thou that, before the blood-red field of Marston, whereon the Lord vouchsafed unto the humblest of his servants to fight the great fight, and to win the crown—even the crown of victory, conjoined with sanguine Mars, didst shine pre-eminent—Beam on! beam on, with that serene and placid gorgeousness, which fills my soul with the high confidence of coming triumph! Ha! who goes there?" he shouted, in a sharp harsh key, strangely at variance with the wild enthusiastic accents of his previous meditations. "Stand ho! and give the word!"

"The sword of Levi!" answered Edgar,

promptly. "Lieutenant-general, I greet you on the eve of battle!"

"Ha! Colonel Ardenne, by the voice," cried Oliver. "Right glad am I now to encounter you. I heard of your arrival, and truly I rejoiced that we should once more ride together into the strife of men. Surely the gentle beauty of the night hath tempted me to wander forth, and commune here alone with mine own spirit. I do profess it is a most fair scene—saw you the stars at any time shine forth more gloriously?"

"It is, indeed, a night of most unusual beauty for this our English climate," Ardenne replied, somewhat surprised at the uncommon turn the conversation had thus taken. "I have seen many such, however, in Italy and Spain. But I know not that you were so deep an admirer of

in the connexion of those brilliant and mysterious lights with the career of men—the course of great events?"

"In truth, not I," answered Ardenne; "nor do I see how such belief can be consistent with the Christian's faith in a supreme and all-commanding Providence!"

"But I do," Cromwell interrupted him. "I see not wherefore the Eternal may not divulge a portion of our fates by means of these—the most sublime of his creations—nor wherefore the appointed angel, who ministers to every one of mortals unto righteousness, may not be likewise the presiding spirit over some one of yonder glorious worlds. I do believe it fully—yea! I have proved it. Lo! see you not yon large clear star, there to the east of Lucifer, and higher toward the pole, brighter than all the planets? It shone upon my birth, and from my boyhood upward have I known and marked the face of that far sparkler, and ever has it varied with the varying of my fortunes, dim and most melan-

choly in my benighted days of evil, and glorious, as you see it now, when aught of greatness or of glory was in prospect. See how it shoots forth jets of most pure light—no other star doth likewise. Verily, verily, the Lord shall work great things for us to-morrow!"

"I have heard tell of this before," Ardenne replied, "of this your superstition—for so I cannot but consider it,—and likewise that you fancy how you a saw a vision years ago."

"Fancy! *fancy* I saw a vision," cried Oliver,

crept over me—I knew that I was not alone, though I saw nothing. I felt as though a pair of mighty wings were spread above me, chilling my very soul—I would have cried aloud, but my voice choked within me—I would have risen up and fled, but could not move a finger. And yet, although I say it, I was then bolder than my years betokened, and feared not man nor devil. It was a night of murky darkness, but suddenly a faint and pallid light filled the whole chamber, not emanating from one brighter point, but uniform as daylight, though very dull and ghastly. My curtains were drawn suddenly asunder, and a tall misty shape stood in the opening. I tell you I did see it perfectly and plainly, for I did not faint, though my flesh quivered aguelike—and the cold sweat stood in beads upon my brow—and my hair bristled, as instinct with life. There stood it while I could have reckoned twenty, and then a deep slow voice, of strange and solemn harmony, rolled forth without an effort—"Arise! arise,"

it said, 'thou that shalt be the first in England!' It then vanished, and all again was darkness, but the voice was tingling in mine ears when the next sun was high in heaven."

"And do you credit this?" asked Ardenne, fixing his eyes with something of suspicion on the face of the enthusiast. "Do you trust in this prophecy? Does this *dream* actuate your waking movements?"

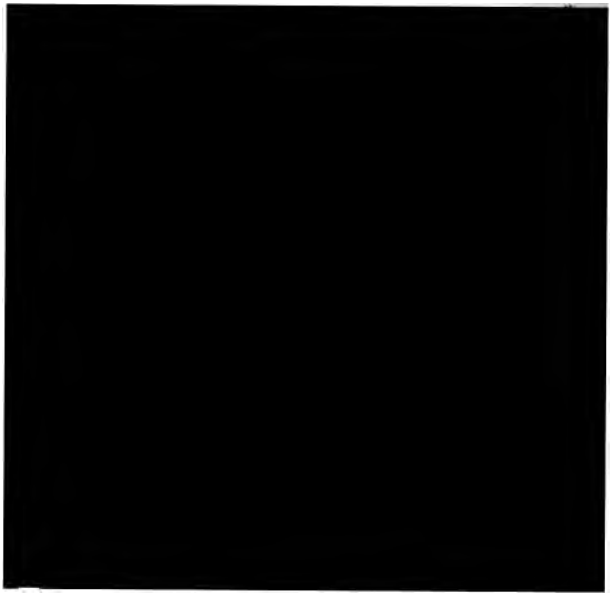
"And wherefore not?" said Cromwell. "The elder Brutus, he who made Rome free, was

violent hands upon thy country's freedom—I have yet so much of the Cassius in me, that I would thrust this sword, which I have buckled on to fight thy battles, into thy very heart, ere thou shouldst live to find thy vision true."

"Wo! wo is me, what have I said!" cried Oliver, apparently much moved. "Alack! alack! truly the flesh is weak, but strong and sincere is the soul. Well hast thou said, my friend, and rightly wouldst thou do, should I be rendered subject to the temptings of the evil one. Wo! wo is me, that I should be mistrusted; surely, if this heart be not honest, then there is neither faith nor honesty in man. But thou, Lord, knowest—thou beholdest—yea! thou readest the most inward thoughts of this thy servant—continue me then, O thou merciful and mighty One, continue me thine instrument; and shield me from the power of the evil one; and be thy word a lantern to my feet; and keep me, even as I now am—thine, O Lord, thy servant and thine only!"

With these words he burst into a violent passion of tears, mingled with sobs so choking and hysterical, that Edgar was alarmed half for the intellect, half for the health of the strange being in whom he felt so deep an interest. Within five minutes, however, the ecstasy had passed away; and, as if he had forgotten all that had occurred between them, Cromwell now addressed him in the decided, although quiet accents of command.

"Soh! Colonel Ardenne, you will join your



trinidado were sending forth their powerful fumes above the savoury odour of the viands."

"Ho! Hezekiah Sin-despise," said Cromwell, addressing a grim-looking trooper—for he knew every one of his men personally and by name—"how fare ye here? Have the knave commissaries dealt with ye righteously? Surely ye must not fast, else shall the flesh be weak upon the morrow."

"Yea, general," returned the Independent, "tis very righteous truth. Wilt not thou taste thyself, so shalt thou judge how fares the sturdy but rough-coated private, on whom doth fall the brunt and burthen of the service?"

"Take, eat!" exclaimed another of the soldiers, tendering to him a wooden platter heaped with beef and bread. "Eat, drink with us to-night, as we shall fight with thee upon the morrow."

"Will I not!" answered Cromwell, seating himself beside the speaker, and helping himself heartily to the plain but wholesome food.

When he had finished eating, he filled a cup

of ale, and, nodding to the troopers, quaffed it until he nearly saw the bottom; then, with a hoarse laugh,

"'Twere evil manners did I not share with *thee*, Born-again Rumford," he exclaimed, "since thou didst share so courteously with *me*;" and instantly, suiting the action to the word, he chucked the rinsings of the cup full into the broad face and grizzly mustaches of the man, who had supplied him with the meat.

"Thou hast it there—thou hast it fairly, Born-

commissary of the horse, I trow, and sees to these your rations—think ye that Ireton and Desborough and Rossiter fare anywise more daintily than ye?"

"Ay, marry!" answered Rumford, somewhat sulkily, "the private and the officer be not alike in aught. Saw we not master Zedekiah, Desborough's secretary, bear, not five minutes since, a right fine haunch of grease and store of flagons of Bourdeaux into his master's tent? Lo! there go Rossiter, and Jepherson, and Fight-the-good-fight Egerton, to banquet even now upon the good things of the earth!"

"Ha! is it so?" cried Cromwell, his eye lighting up. "Verily, then the kid shall be preserved from out the spoiler's jaws, and given as a feast unto the shepherds!—yea, even unto those who watch! See here, Baptized-again; I go hence straightway to my quarters—enter thou in to Desborough's pavilion, and summon them all instantly to meet me at my tent in council. When ye shall hear three taps upon

the kettledrum, then rush in, all of ye, and fall to bravely—spare not to spoil the haunch, nor yet to drain the flagons—I, even I myself, will stand between ye and the fierce wrath of your officers."

"Cromwell! live Cromwell!" shouted the delighted soldiers. "Now may the Lord preserve to us valiant and trusty Cromwell!"

The object of their rude praises turned aside, but, ere he went, another rugged jest showed yet further the wild humour which at time

cried Oliver. "Orderly officer, set Hezekiah Sin-despise down in thy book, five shillings for an oath. Truly thou shalt no more be known as 'Sin-despise,' but rather as 'Overcome-by-sin.'"

Again the soldiers roared their merry approbation, till Oliver, surveying with a mirthful aspect the contortions of the scorched veteran, and moved to some compassion by his rueful countenance, drew forth his purse, and, taking out the fine, handed it to the non-commissioned officer.

"Our discipline must be preserved," he said; "and the foul vice of swearing I do abhor—yea, utterly. But, in that some share of the fault was mine, who tempted the loud railing of this rash Rabshakeh—verily, I will pay the sum in which he standeth mulcted. Tush! twist not thyself, man, to and fro, nor grin, as though it hurt thee—methought my ironsides were proof 'gainst fire as well as steel!" and, without further

words, he hastened to his tent, where he found Ardenne waiting with the list of his returns.

"When all the council shall have entered in," he whispered to the sentry at the door, "strike three taps on the kettledrum, and suffer none to come in or to go out after."

Scarce had he spoken, ere the officers made their appearance, Desborough wearing a marked air of sullen discomposure, and all save Ireton, whose spirit was of a higher and a nobler mould,

"Soh! we have done at last," he said — "Have you supped, gentlemen? So far as goes a crust of bread and cheese, and a good cup of ale—campaigner's fare—I can supply you, if you will tarry here, and eat with me."

"Thanks, worthy general," said Rossiter; "but in good sooth we were just at the sitting down in Desborough's tent, when that your summons reached us. He hath, I know not how, wrung forth a noble haunch of venison and store of Bourdeaux wine from some misproud malignant here at Naseby!"

"Soh! soh! right creature comforts—trust Desborough for that!" Cromwell replied.—"Why spoke ye not of this beforehand, my business might have tarried—but let me not detain you—Farewell, until the morrow."

"Not so! fair sir," Desborough answered—"please you to walk with us and share our supper."

"Nay, I have supped already!" he replied,

"with some good fellows of Jepherson's stout regiment. Well, since you be so pressing, I will e'en walk down, and crush one cup of wine with ye," and without further words they all proceeded, conversing gaily as they went, toward the tent of Desborough.

They reached it; and how strange a scene was there!—the canvass flapping on all sides open to the air — the lamps streaming and flaring in the night wind—the seats around the table occupied by a dozen or so of wild-looking

—somewhat rude; yet do the soldiers prize him all the more for them."

"Damnation!" muttered Desborough in violent though smothered fury—"but this doth pass a joke!"

"Yea! 'tis a *passing* good one!" answered Oliver, with an attempt at wit which drew a laugh from the carousers—"But surely thou didst swear; a fine! a fine unto our treasury—look to it Mr. Commissary!—So now these excellent good fellows have watched with their lights burning, and their loins girded up, and they have their reward. Art thou an hungered, Desborough?—nay then our worthy Ireton will find you rations; less delicate, perchance, than yon fat haunch, that was; but savouring more justly of the camp, and more proportionate to the hard messes of your fellow-soldiers in the Lord. Fy! fy! but this was gluttony—and the means too, if I mistake not, won by extortion! But enough of this! Off with ye to

your quarters, ye well-fed knaves, and no
this carousal; and ye, fair gentlemen, t
supperless, good rest to ye.—Right b
shall we breakfast on the morrow, an
keep his purpose.—The Lord save ye!"

CHAPTER IX.

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away
The morning from her mantle gray,
And the noon will look on a sultry day.
Hark to the trump and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
And the flap of the banners that flit as they're borne,
And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,
And the clash, and the shout, "They come! they come!"

The Siege of Corinth.

At an early hour of the following morning, while the east was yet gray with the lingering shadows of the night, the army of the inde-

pendents drew out into line, and formed itself on ground of the most advantageous nature. This was a long range of low hillocks dominating the whole plain or valley that separates the towns of Harborough and Naseby, the latter lying in the flat a little to the north-west of the parliament's position. Their centre for the most part was made up of musketeers and pikemen with a good park of field artillery, and Fairfax's life-guard in the reserve, the whole commanded personally by that true gentleman and gallant

golden light succeeded, and then the great sun himself rose up in living splendour from the low horizon.

The vapours gradually melted from the low-lands, and disclosed a beautiful expanse of rural scenery; deep pastures studded with noble trees, green hedges rich in the flowery garniture of spring, masses of forest throwing their dark-blue shadows in long checkered lines across the laughing meadows—all sparkling with the morning dew-drops—all clothed as with a radiant mantle in gay and gorgeous sunshine. The cattle lowed in the abundant valleys, the lark sprang upward from the pearly sod, the rooks sailed forth upon their matin voyage, their harsh voices pleasingly mellowed by the distance, the hares limped through the young wheat scattering the dew from the thick herbage in lengthened mazes—but not one sound or sight was there betokening aught save happiness and peaceful quietude.

The royal host, meanwhile, was also in array

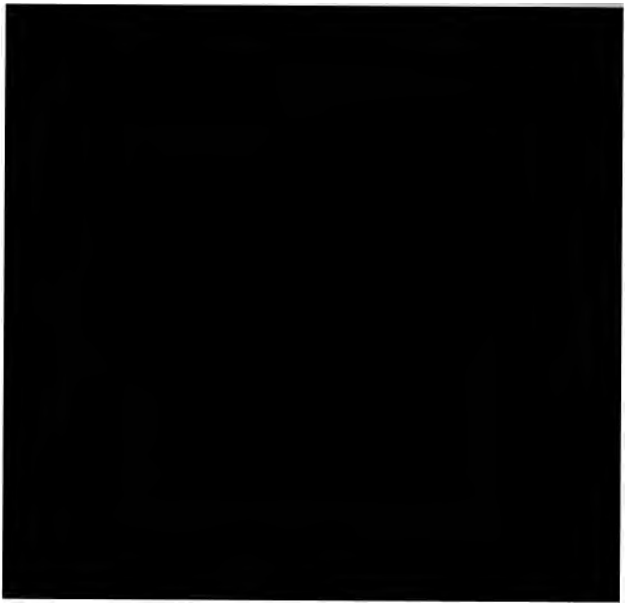
some six miles distant on a height just south of Harborough, and posted yet more strongly than their enemies, could the mad impetuosity of those whom heaven had marked out for destruction have tarried to avail itself of their advantage. But as the day drew on, Rupert, who led the cavalry of the King's right—leaving the centre under Lord Astley and the left commanded by the noble Langdale still in position on the hills, with the life and horse-guards in reserve—dashed forth, two thousand strong, to

his whole force under the guns of their position; Rupert having been fairly staggered by the fire of his skirmishers.

Still, with his wonted obstinacy, that rash leader persisted in believing that the puritans were in retreat; and despatched message after message to order first, and then to hurry the advance of the main army, which left its vantage-ground and fatally descended into the open plain; so that, before three hours had elapsed, the generals of the parliament might see the whole of the King's host rushing like birds into the fowler's net. With admirable foresight, Fairfax resolved to suffer them to clear the broken country ere he should attack them; seeing that, if defeated, the enemy must be cut off among the lanes and passes, which would be choked with fugitives the instant that the battle should be turned into a route.

The ground immediately below the hill was open, as was the whole width of the slope, excepting two or three stout timber fences, and

a group or two of trees, which were at once pulled down, or felled, by Ireton's pioneers clearing as fair a field for an encounter as ever was defaced and trampled into gory ruin by the death-shock of thousands. A little after ten, on that bright summer morning, Rupert's bold cavaliers had cleared the woodlands; the heads of Astley's columns were seen slowly taking up their ground, and wheeling into line to form the centre, while Langdale with his northern horse was toiling at a full mile's distance in the rear



Still the impetuous Rupert paused not—the instant that the cavalry of Langdale came into view upon the left, his bugles sounded for the charge; and with a cheery shout, leading his fiery squadrons, himself the foremost man, he hurled himself against the horse of Ireton, with the velocity and brightness of a thunderbolt.

Forward they rushed—a torrent of plumes, scarfs, and rich embroidery—their brandished rapiers glittering aloft like lightning, and their high-blooded chargers tearing the turf to atoms in their furious speed. Such was the fury of their onset, that neglecting to discharge their carabines they plunged at once into the closest conflict. There was a clang as of ten thousand smiths plying their iron trade!—a shout that was heard, as men say, at Harborough!—And brave although they were, stubborn and resolute, the cavalry of Ireton wavered. In vain their high-souled leader strained every nerve, and bled at every pore;—now here, now there; rallying, shouting, charging, in vain he crossed

swords with the fiery prince and checked him for one moment—they bent, they broke, they fled!

Then flashed the pistol-shots, and in unbroken force over them swept the cavaliers!—The ground was cumbered with the slain—but still, over the dead and dying, over the voiceless trumpet and the tattered banner, over the mute dismounted ordnance, amid the groans and blasphemies, the shivering clash of steel, the neigh of maddened chargers, and the wild shouts of his victorious troopers, on charged the

bearing destruction it knows not and it seeks not whither, Rupert pursued the fliers—mile after mile they fled—mile after mile he followed —beyond the heavy ordnance, beyond the baggage of the parliament; cheering until his throat was parched and his voice clove to his jaws—slaying until his sword was blunted, and his arm weary and exhausted.

Scarce five troops of the whole left wing had held their ground, and these under the valiant Ireton, as fired by the success of their companions Astley's stout infantry came steadily and firmly onward, charged gallantly upon a stand of pikes—they were hurled backward, as from a castle-wall, and still that deep array of pikes rolled onward.—They rallied, and again they charged, driving their horses in upon the serried spears, and firing their pistols in the faces of the sturdy footmen; but the cavaliers received them as the bull receives the mastiff and hurls him from his unscathed front.—Their leader was dismounted, and made prisoner, their

bravest were stabbed down and mangled by the goring pikes—they scattered and fled in diverse directions.

But now the musketry awoke, mixed with the louder bellowing of artillery, but save the rolling smoke-wreaths packed above the hosts in the calm hush of the hot noontide, and the red glare that ever and anon surged upward, and now the waving of a standard, and now the flash of wheeling weapons half seen among the volleying clouds, nought could be de-

had scarce formed, even when Rupert's charge had pushed the horse of Ireton clear off the field; and Cromwell dared not flank the foot of Astley, lest he should be in turn out-flanked by Langdale. But now with kettledrums and trumpets, and shot of carabine and pistol, Sir Marmaduke advanced upon the gallop; and Cromwell, tarrying not to receive his charge, swung forth his heavy squadrons with a thundering hymn to meet him.

An officer rode forward from the Yorkshire men, as both lines halted to reload, and Oliver dashed out in person to encounter him. Their pistols were discharged in vain, for Cromwell's bullet glanced from the corslet of the cavalier, and the other fired at random.—Then blade to blade they met, a dozen passes flashed with the speed of light between them—their horses wheeled and bounded obedient to the bit—Oliver missed a parry, and his morion, with the chin-strap severed, fell clanging to the ground; but without hesitation on he went, and hailed so

thick a storm of blows upon his foeman, that he beat down his guard, and hurled him headlong.

The whole passed in a few instants—ere a few more had elapsed, the adverse lines were mingled—yet as they closed Born-again Rumford sprang to earth, caught up the general's morion and tossed it to his saddle bow. Hastily, as he galloped on, shouting his battle anthem, and still at every shout striking a cavalier down from his saddle, he threw the morion on, but

pursuit, although their blood was stirred almost to frenzy by the protracted struggle, and by the heat of their religious zeal.

"On, Ardenne, on!" Oliver shouted, as he halted his own five regiments. "Pursue, pursue! suffer them not to rally—support him, Rossiter—away! Break them to pieces—scatter them! The Lord of Hosts hath given them a prey into our hands! All glory to the name of our God!"

As he spoke, he wheeled at once upon the flank and rear of Astley's infantry, which still maintained the conflict in the centre, slowly but steadily forcing their way against the stubborn valour of the puritans. One hope remained for Charles—one only. In the reserve himself, with his life-guard commanded by Lord Lindesay, and his own picked horse-guards—his *troupe dorée* of nobles under the Earl of Litchfield, and Rupert's best foot-regiment—in all some thirteen hundred men, fresh and unwearied, who had not on that day unsheathed

a sword, or pulled a trigger, Charles had a fair occasion to draw out and fall upon the flank of Cromwell, as he swept round to charge the foot; and so, to do him but free justice, he proposed. Bidding his trumpets sound, and drawing his own rapier—sheathed, as he was, in glittering steel from crest to spur, conspicuous by his broad blue scarf and diamond George—he plunged his rowels into that snow-white charger, rendered immortal by the deathless pencil of Vandyck—his pale and melancholy

fallen out, the victory would have been the King's; for Rupert's scattered troops were even now beginning to return, and Fairfax could scarce hold his own.

But the charge was *not* made. Whether from folly, cowardice, or treason, it now can never be discovered, the Earl of Carnewarth, a mere cipher in that band of England's noblest peers, seized on the bridle of the King. "Saul o' my body!" he exclaimed, in his broad Scotch accent, "will you then go upon your death this instant?" and, ere the hapless monarch could comprehend his meaning, or arrest the movement, he dragged his charger toward the rear.

Then, on the instant, a strange panic fell on all around; so that they fled upon the spur, although no enemy was near them; and though at length the King's exertions—who spurred through the ranks beseeching them to stand, and even striking at the fugitives in impotent

but noble indignation—brought them to rally, and ride back toward the field, the moment had gone by. It was too late. For Fairfax, when he saw how Cromwell had succeeded on his right, and felt the consequences of his charge upon the royal foot in the disorder of that sturdy mass, moved down at once his own life-guard from the reserve, and brought it into action.

The prince had, indeed, now returned from his insane pursuit, but his men, deeming that their part was played for that day, could not be

his life-guards round upon the rear of that undaunted square, charged it himself in front. Two horses were shot under him, but a third time remounting, he brought up his men, though shattered by the constant volleys, to renewed exertion.

In the last deadly rush, his helmet was torn violently off by a pike's point. The colonel of his life-guard proffered his own; but no! bareheaded as he was, he dashed upon the spears—he hewed his way into that serried band—with his own hand he cleft the ensign of the regiment, who crossed his path, through morion and skull down to the very teeth—he waved the captured banner round his head, and threw it to a private for safe keeping, who afterwards would fain have claimed the honour. That line of pikes once broken, in swept the independents with the rush of a springtide, and, where it fought, that firm battalion, refusing quarter and resisting to the last, was trod-

den to the earth, annihilated, but unconquered.

The victory was complete—the route disastrous. Even to the walls of Leicester, Cromwell's fierce zealots did execution on the flying cavaliers. From three miles south of Harborough to nine beyond it, the country was one wide-spread scene of flight, massacre, and havoc. Five thousand of the royalists were slain or taken from an army which had mustered but eight thousand in the morning. Two hundred

the last hour, as when he first set up his standard—of reigning, if at all, a monarch irresponsible and absolute.

That victory decided the campaign, and that campaign the cause of England's freedom.

CHAPTER X.

To that father's heart

deserted, except by those who, having fallen in the full tide of violence and fury, now slept as soundly and as well upon the gory turf as if they had departed from their peaceful beds amid the weeping ministry of friends; or those less fortunate, who lay hopelessly writhing in their mortal agonies, 'scorched with the death thirst,' and torturing the tainted air with their unheeded lamentations.

The hot sun poured his steadiest and brightest rays over that scene of carnage, glancing as if in mockery upon the gorgeous dresses, the rich armour, and the noble steeds—lately so full of fiery life and beauty—which shed but now a halo of false glory over the horrors and the misery of warfare.

The roundheads had withdrawn to their encampment on the hills, and were recruiting themselves after the heat and labours of the day, in that deathlike and absolute repose which is the sweetest balm to soul and body, both equally exhausted by the tension of unnatural excite-

ment, No plunderers—those human vultures that haunt the battle-field to render horror yet more horrible—crept stealthily among the dying and the dead; for such was the severe and ruthless discipline of Cromwell, that the few sordid spirits, who necessarily mingled with the high enthusiasts of freedom and religion, dared not even by night, much less in the broad daylight, to exercise their odious calling. But the ravens had already flocked in hundreds to the plain, lured by the scent of carnage from the wide woodlands

Christian mercy—no further than was needful to prevent their rallying that day; and it had given him more pleasure than he had felt for many a month, to see with what a generous and British sentiment his men, though hot in blood, the most part wounded more or less severely, and all exasperated by the fall of many a gallant comrade, refused—even when urged by the fierce exhortations of their more fanatical commanders—to strike an unresisting foeman. While they fought front to front, their hearts were hardened, and their hands unmerciful; but when the rush and fury of the conflict had passed over, they felt that those poor fugitives were countrymen and brothers.

How trumpet-tongued does this fact cry aloud in the behalf of those much-slandered independents, whom it has pleased the writers of grave sober history—all either prelatists or presbyterians—to represent as stern, morose, bloodthirsty, and remorseless.

In the protracted fight, and in the hotly-

urged pursuit, eight hundred only of the royalists were slain, and of these more than three fourths occupied the ground whereon they fought, cut down *flagrante prælio*, with weapons in their hands; while Rupert's onset, and the massacre which followed it, needlessly savage and unsparing, alone cost Ireton's brigade more lives than the whole royal loss!

The prisoners, not the slain—the prisoners and the results, were the true tests and trophies of the victory at Naseby.

in very bitterness of heart, he beat his bosom with his hands till his steel corslet clattered. Not one of these but died, in his own creed, self-justified—not one but deemed himself a patriot and a martyr—the churchman as the puritan—the fiery loyalist, as the severe republican—each battling for his country's rights—each honestly believing his opponent the rebel, or the tyrant.

Alas, for human reason! Alas, for human error! Alas, for vanity and ignorance—for blindness and presumption! Alas, for right and wrong—for virtue and for vice! Where—where on earth shall we discover the distinction—how test them here below—save by the arbitry of the false harlot fortune, save by the sophist touchstone of success?

At every step the hoofs of Edgar's charger plashed with a sickening sound in the dark curdled gore that flowed commingling from the wounds of that fine aristocracy—that old high stock of English gentlemen, polished in courts

athletic and well-skilled in every manly feat of rural exercise, second to none as scholars in the forum, or as soldiers in the field, lowly in bearing to the low, open and frank among their peers, haughty and proud to their superiors; and of that independent yeomanry, fearless and generous and free, remote alike from insolence and cringing, dauntless and staunch in war, blunt and sincere in peace, the children, tillers, owners of the soil; both races equally "Eng-

flict between principles of legalized authority and arbitrary sway, or a mere strife between the interests of Cromwell and Charles Stuart?

Such were the gloomy thoughts that sat so heavy at the heart of the young conqueror; such the unanswered doubts that almost led him to distrust himself, almost to curse the hour when he joined the standard of the parliament. But it was not long ere more immediate cares, sorrows more near and kindred, diverted, if they could not overpower, the half-prophetic achings of his patriotic soul.

The course which Langdale's fugitives had taken, far to the right hand of the field, prevented him on his return from meeting the main tide of the King's army, which was scattered irretrievably, and covered the plain toward Harborough. He therefore rode directly toward the post of Cromwell. It was near three of the afternoon, when he arrived and found the leader of the ironsides mounted again, and at the head of his brigade, refreshed by their brief halt—

about to set forth instantly in the pursuit. Before he started on his march, however, he handed several letters to an orderly dragoon, who stood, booted and spurred, with a broad leathern belt and a despatch bag buckled round his waist, waiting his orders.

"This," he said—"this to the Honourable William Lenthal, the Speaker of the Commons House of Parliament—with your own hand, remember your own hand!—This to the Wor-

whom the Lord loveth most he chasteneth!—Is not this righteous truth?"

"Undoubtedly," Edgar replied, not unsurprised by the peculiar manner of his leader —"Undoubtedly it is; but wherefore say you this to me?"

"Yea! and he tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb. So may he temper it to thee—humbly and fervently I trust — honest and valiant friend, in thy time of affliction—much have I prayed and wrestled with the Lord, since I did hear—"

"What—what? I pray you speak, lieutenant-general, if you know aught concerning me or mine. There needeth not this tampering with the subject, I can endure to hear aught of affliction, human tongue can tell me."

"Be you so strong?" said Cromwell—"man then your heart; for of a truth your father is a prisoner—in the camp, sore-wounded, ay! unto death I fear me."

Where lies he?" Edgar inquired with a

voice so preternaturally calm, that Oliver himself gazed at him wondering. "Hath he had any help?"

"I caused him to be borne," Oliver answered, "down to the village yonder, even unto the house of the Episcopalian priest. Two of his own domestics be about him; and General Fairfax hath sent his own chirurgeon—best hasten, though, if thou wouldst see him living. I march forthwith—but tarry thou behind, until

nothing but its superior neatness, and its close vicinity to the square ivy-mantled tower, and the yew-shadowed yard, with its low mossy graves of the small village-church. A noble lime-tree, myriads of bees humming and revelling amid its scented blossoms—overhung the grassplot in the front, and a thick growth of honeysuckle crept over the whole building, curtaining porch and roof with its close-matted verdure, and peeping with its honeyed trumpets through the latticed casements.

Each hut and cottage through the hamlet had been converted into a temporary hospital for the reception of the wounded from the near battle-field, but by the group of horses guarded by a stout knot of troopers, and the two sturdy sentinels who kept the door, the son knew instantly the sojourn of his father.

Curbing his horse so violently up that he had well-nigh fallen on his haunches, he sprang down, and rushed under the low doorway. Just as his foot was on the threshold, a person,

whom he judged to be the surgeon, was passing onward.

"How fares he?" Edgar gasped—the words half-choking in his throat—"How fares your patient?—Have you any hope?"

The man of healing shook his head—"None—not the slightest," he replied—"the ball hath severed all the main intestines. The hæmorrhage has ceased externally—and he is easier now—mortification must ensue; he cannot live six hours! I have done all I may, in

big tear-drops fell like rain down his own withered cheeks, and the white-headed vicar kneeling in silent prayer beside the death-bed of the cavalier—there lay his father, with his high features pale and sharpened by the near approach of the destroyer, and the froth gathering round his bloodless lips, and the dark drops of icy perspiration bursting from every pore of his broad temples.

No groan, nor murmur passed the mouth of the calm sufferer, but one sad, querulous, and oft-repeated cry—"Comes he not yet?—not yet?"—But when the foot of Edgar, lightly although he set it on the floor, clinked with its jingling spurs upon his ear, he started half-erect, and drew his hand across his eyes, as if to clear away the gathering mists.

"'Tis he!" he cried in tones, distinct and clear from the excitement of the moment, a faint flush lighting up his ashy cheeks, but instantly departing—"'Tis he at length—thank God—my son! my son!—"

And into that son's arms he sunk, and lay there as contentedly as though no cloud of anger or mistrust had ever come between them, smiling up with a faint but most kind smile into his face, and clasping his convulsed and trembling hand with all the little strength his mortal wound had left him.

For many moments Edgar could find no voice—his whole frame shook with agony—he sobbed as though his very heart would burst, gazing upon the countenance of that loved

grows very short to say it. Our reverend friend, to whom I owe so much, and good Master Winterfield, will pardon us a little while—and Anthony—old faithful Anthony will leave us. We have not met for many days, and we would fain be private ere we part—" and his voice failed a little, and a tear stood in his clear gray eye—" part, as we must, for ever. We will recall you—" he continued—" presently; for I would fain pray with this holy man, ere I go hence to stand before my Maker."

There was a pause—a long sad pause, as all obeyed his words, broken by nothing but the hard breathing of the wounded man, and the strong sobbing of the mourner.

" Edgar," the old man said at length, " are we alone? have they all left us?" and then, his question being answered—" This is a sorrowful, yet a most happy meeting; for I feel—I feel here—" and he laid his hand upon his breast—" that that kind heart of yours has

pardoned all the wrongs—the cruel and unmanly wrongs which I have heaped on you. Is it not so, my boy, my kind and noble boy?"

"Oh, speak not thus!" he answered, when he could force a word—"oh, speak not thus, my father; you have been ever good—too generous! too good! 'Tis I—'tis I alone, may Heaven forgive me, that have been to blame. Say only that you pardon me, and bless me, oh father!"

"No! no!" exclaimed Sir Henry, with more of energy than he had spoken yet—"I will

"Oh, no," cried the repentant son. "It was my duty to obey you—to bear with you—to do, in every thing, your bidding—"

"Not so," Sir Henry once more interrupted him. "'Tis no man's duty to obey in things against his conscience; and I was but a fool—an obstinate and merciless old fool—that would not even hear you. Nay more! nay more," he cried, wringing his hands with mental torture, "rash miserable sinner that I am, I would have slain you, but for that angel girl—slain *you*, that would have never been within my power but for your self-devoting efforts to preserve me. And I *have* slain your quietude—your peace of mind for ever! blasted your hopes of fireside happiness—banished you from the dwelling of your fathers—robbed you—ay, robbed you of your heritage—divorced you from your bride—cut short your hopes of leaving your high name to sons as glorious as yourself. All this—all this, and much more, have I done—much more!"

As he spoke, he sunk back quite exhausted

by his own vehemence; but in a moment, heeding not the tremulous intreaties of his son, that he would not wear out his faculties with this most needless passion,

"I will, I will," he answered—"I will go through with my confession. Reach me that cup, and hear me."

He drained the draught of some mild opiate, mingled with wine and water, and proceeded.

"Much more of deadly sin than this! I am the murderer of Sibyl!"

angel-like, and more unearthly in her pure holy loveliness? and I have done this also—this foul and gradual murder? And she will waste away before her time, and sink by inches into the cold dark grave, blessing her slayer as she dies! And thou too, thou, my son, wilt live a sorrowing and solitary thing; for thy strong noble soul will not succumb to any violence or spite of fortune. Alone upon the earth, like the last oak of a druidic grove, when all its brother trees have fallen by the woodman's axe—magnificent, and flourishing, and stately, yet sad in all its dignity—friendless, companionless, alone, and with the worm—the never-dying worm—busily gnawing at its heart—yet happier than thee in this—that 'twas not by a father's hand its green companions fell; not by a father's hand the foul-destroying worm was thurst into its bosom! No, no! it cannot be; you can *not* pardon me!"

"All this," said Edgar, calmly, yet much moved, though smothering his emotion—"all

this is but the work of Heaven. The Lord hath willed it so, and we are but the instruments, the wretched instruments, within the hollow of his hand. If you have erred, as I say not you have, you erred in honour, and believing yourself justified. But if it be a comfort to you, hear me now, on my knees beside your dying bed, declare that never—never for one short moment, have I felt any wrath or bitterness—never known any feeling toward you, dearest and most honoured father, save the most deep heart-spring-

noble-hearted boy—Heaven bless you, and it will —it *must* bless such as you—and prosper you with all its choicest stores, and make you tenfold compensation for your past and present sorrows."

And he drew down the lips of Edgar to his own, and clasped his arms about his neck; and their tears mingled long and silently, and their prayers went up together to the throne of mercy; and with those tears, and that embrace, the bitterness passed by, the iron was drawn out from the old warrior's soul.

The clergyman returned, the simple but affecting service of the church was feelingly performed, the last most holy rite partaken both by the son and sire—the servants were called in, the faithful followers of their lord through weal and woe—and a faint smile, a sad farewell, a kindly pressure of the honoured hand dismissed each weeping, not as for a master, but rather as for a friend and father, from the low chamber—and once again the father

and the son were left in solitude. There they remained for hours—the old man, while his hard breathing shook the frail couch beneath him, calm, patient, and serene—the stately son bowed down, and bent as if by age, clasping the languid hand that grew at every instant sensibly colder and more pulseless, and sorrowing as one who would not be consoled, although he choked his anguish, lest it should but increase his father's sufferings.

The bright warm sun had long since sunk into

garden a solitary nightingale, awakened by the glorious lustre of the planet, started at once into its wild and melancholy flood of song.

The dying man, who had sunk into a long and tranquil slumber, moved now uneasily, he made an effort to turn over, and the pain caused by the motion roused him. "Sibyl!" he muttered, hardly yet awake,—"Sibyl, your song is wondrous sweet to-night; but why so sad? it should be gay as summer after this blessed union.—Ah!" he continued,—"Ah!" as consciousness returned, "I dreamed—I have slept pleasantly, and dreamed a most delicious dream. Is it late, Edgar?"

"The clock hath just chimed ten," Edgar replied. "I would have called for lights, but feared to awaken you—shall I now do so?"

"No," he said faintly. "No, it matters not now. How calm it is, and sweet—the blessed moonlight streams in through the casement, like Heaven's own mild forgiveness into a sinner's bosom. Edgar, when I am gone, say to

my poor, poor Sibyl, that on my happy death-bed my sole regret was that I could not join her hand with yours for ever. She will be yours now—*now*, that this miserable war is ended—for it *is* ended, Edgar, and I regret its termination less, that I have lately seen much in Charles Stuart—in the King—that I had disbelieved, or shut my eyes upon, before—a good man, but—it will out—a bad king." He hath, I must confess it, dealt insincerely with his nearest councillors. He hath kept up a

ay! and to know his measures—since for him they have risked their all!—done in deep malice to his enemies—in deeper guile to whom he calls his friends!—Out! out, I say, upon such kingcraft!—But enough of this.—She will be yours, and you will both be happy yet—as I am now—most happy! How soothing is that sad bird's note! I could almost believe it is prophetic.—How beautiful—how peaceful!"

He was again for some time silent, as though absorbed in listening, or in thought; and Edgar, who well knew his end was very near at hand, was motionless, and almost breathless, his heart was far too full for words. At length the old man spoke once more; but now his voice was very faint and low, and all its accents were so altered, that his nearest friend could not have recognised a tone—and his words came at intervals, quivering and slow and interrupted.

"How exquisite," he said,—"how exquisite this tranquil bliss!—Never—no never felt I such complete peace—such perfect happiness—

Edgar—Edgar—my time—is drawing—near.—My feet grow numb and cold.—Kiss me—boy—kiss me. The bird hath ceased his song!"—(Even while he spoke, its notes were filling every corner of the chamber with its most thrilling melody.) "The moon hath set!"—(Yet she was streaming full on his uncurtained couch.) "All—all is dark—and silent.—Time—it is time—to die!—My boy—my own boy!—Bless you—Sibyl!—Sibyl!—"

It was over—the spirit had departed to its

OLIVER CROMWELL:

AN

Historical Romance.

EDITED

BY HORACE SMITH, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"BRAMBLETYE HOUSE."

Yet is the tale, *true* though it be, as strange,
As full, methinks, of wild and wondrous change,
As any that the wandering tribes require,
Stretched in the desert round their evening fire;
As any sung of old in hall or bower
To minstrel-harps at midnight's witching hour.

ROGERS's *Poems.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CROMWELL.

BOOK III.

There can be slain
No sacrifice to God more acceptable
Than an unjust and wicked king.

MILTON. (*From Seneca.*)

CROMWELL.

CHAPTER I.

The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins
Remorse from power: and to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affection swayed
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber upward turns his face,
But when he once attains the topmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.

Julius Cæsar.

Two full years had gone round since the defeat of Naseby had paralyzed the efforts and destroyed the hopes of Charles Stuart's party

during the whole remainder of that fatal year—even when winter had set in with its most keen severity—the arms of Cromwell swept like a hurricane over the western and the midland counties. No leader could compete with him on terms of vantage or equality—no forces stand against him in the field—no town or garrison resist his prowess. Chief after chief was beaten in detail; stronghold upon stronghold surrendered, or was stormed sword in hand; till, to

with the parliament, and with the independent leaders—negotiations marked by all his usual chicane and insincerity—on the fifth day of May, Charles threw himself into the quarters of the Earl of Leven, then besieging Newark.

How the Scots dealt with their unhappy monarch—who, whatsoever were his faults, undoubtedly confided in their honour—the world knows, for it has become a brand of national reproach. Treated — from the first moment, when they found he would not guarantee their covenant, and promise to establish presbyterian rule throughout the land—not as a prisoner merely, but with indignity and insult, how Judas-like they sold him to the parliament, and gave him up to Skippon like a mere thing of merchandise, on payment of two hundred thousand pounds, is history. But not so—that it was several times in the unfortunate King's power to escape to France or Holland, but that the menacing and angry letters of his false queen, who had her own peculiar reasons for

dreading a reunion with her injured husband at this moment, prevented him till it was all too late, and in effect consigned him to the block.

That the uxorious and weak King was mainly prompted to the war by the ill counsels of his adulterous spouse is evident. Her pride — her education—her hereditary prejudices—her selfwill—nay, her very birth itself, made it but natural that she should aim at arbitrary power, and urge her husband, himself obstinate as

fered to indulge in all his favourite recreations, though strictly watched, and vigilantly hindered from any secret correspondence with his friends, and even interdicted from communion with ministers of the episcopalian church.

At this very time there was in progress a desperate struggle between the presbyterians and the army. The former, having already utterly suppressed episcopacy through the realm, proceeded with the sternest and most bigoted intolerance of persecution against all sects, papist or protestant, clearly demonstrating their resolution to subject the whole kingdom to a system of church-governance connected with the state, under the presbyterian form, as fully organized as that which they had just put down, and ten times more obnoxious to domestic freedom—ten times more rigid, fierce, inquisitorial and tyrannical.

Against these measures the independents, who although a minority in both houses, were formidable from the talents of the leaders, the

enthusiasm of the mass, the real justice of their cause, and above all from the fact that they possessed the power of the sword, the army being almost unanimously in their favour, offered all constitutional opposition — but to no purpose. Petition after petition was presented, only to be contemned and disregarded. Just at this moment it was rumoured, and — as was shortly proved—most truly, that the parliament was now preparing to disband the army without

treated with the parliament, as a species of fourth estate holding itself under arms, and ready for offensive action. At the first of this crisis, Cromwell opposed the mutineers with such apparent energy and zeal, that for a time he lost his popularity with his own soldiery; and shortly afterward having been accused, or at the least suspected in the House of underhanded tampering with the mutineers, he cleared himself to the full satisfaction of all present by a most vehement and overpowering burst of indignation, mingled with tears and prayers and explanations, such as removed from every mind all doubts of his integrity.

Shortly, however, fresh suspicions were excited among the presbyterian leaders, who, dark and wily in their own secret machinations, naturally feared the like manœuvres from their political opponents. By some means it transpired, that a new presbyterian army was to be raised forthwith, the veteran host compelled to disband at the sword's point, and Cromwell,

Ireton, and Harrisson—the champions of the independents—committed to the Tower.

Thus forced in self-defence to concur in those very movements, which they had first opposed as mutiny—unless they should prefer to submit tamely to their own destruction, and to the overthrow of all those principles of civil and religious freedom for which they had so long and painfully contended—the military chieftains acted with all that rapid and decisive energy, which had continually signalized their conduct

Holmby, he at once replied that "nought but force should urge him to it."

In good truth, the difference of his situation was so great, as well to justify his preference; and, could he even then have laid aside dissimulation and acted with straightforward singleness of purpose, it is most certain he might again have filled the throne of his forefathers. Both parties were, indeed, at this time willing, nay desirous, to reinstate the sovereign; for such an union, as that measure would have caused, with the still powerful, though beaten, faction of the cavaliers, would have placed either permanently in the ascendant. The presbyterians proffered to replace him on the throne, provided he would yield assent to the substitution of a presbytery for the established church of England, endowed with all its ancient privileges; to the absolute suppression of all other sects; and further to such cessions of prerogative as would have left him but the shadow of a sceptre. The independents stipulated merely for univer-

sal toleration—excepting only papistry, which they insisted he should extirpate entirely, root and branch—and for the full securing to all men of every constitutional and civil privilege.

In either case Charles's life and throne would have been both secured to him; yet could he not refrain from playing off the one against the other faction, till both had learned that they could place no confidence in his sincerity or truth.

While he continued with the army all was for

gospellers, but of their own military saints—consistent at the least in this—were willing to concede to others, unlike the bitterer presbyterians, the same rights which they claimed for themselves.

Fortified now by possessing not the person only, but the confidence and favour of the King, the army moved toward London. From Newmarket they marched to Royston, Reading, and Windsor; and at the latter place Charles occupied his royal castle. Thence, after some delay, advancing, they encamped on Hounslow, their leaders holding constant although guarded intercourse with their now trembling and half-discomfited opponents.

Early in August the King was reinstalled in Hampton Court, and all things seemed to be once more his own. His yeomen of the wardrobe and the guard attended him; he was permitted to hold levees of all parties—all his own favourite advisers were permitted to resort to him, including many under the ban of

parliament. There was, as it were, a general amnesty and reconciliation. Members of both the Houses visited him—Cromwell and Ireton held close and constant intercourse with him; and so sincere were these in their intention to befriend him, that they actually commenced a correspondence with the Queen's emissaries, and suffered Berkeley, Legge, and Ashburnham, once more to take their places in his council.

The adjutators of the regiments, elected by the privates, and members from the council

would place him where he was before the outbreak of hostilities.

The citizens of London and the militia of that city greedily entered on the scheme, and signed the covenant by thousands!—Both Houses instantly voted this an act of treason against England — that very night their doors were forced by a tumultuous and infuriate mob of presbyterians mingled with concealed royalists —their persons were assailed with violence and insult, their very lives endangered! Compelled by imminent and sudden peril they passed a hasty vote sanctioning his return, but the next instant voted an adjournment as unable to deliberate with liberty of conscience; and straightway a large party of both Houses, with the speakers — Manchester and Lenthall — at their head, withdrew from the disordered capital, and finally repaired to seek protection in the camp at Hounslow.

In the mean time, the violent presumption of the King, unduly elevated by his supposed

success, and instigated further by the intriguing Ashburnham, induced him actually to treat with contumely the adjutators of the army, openly refusing to concede the smallest jot of his prerogative, and even intimating his intention again to force episcopacy on the Scots.

Inflamed to madness by this strange tergiversation the soldiers flew to arms; and a strong party forced their way into the chamber of Lord Lauderdale, then in the palace, and compelled him to return, having held no communi-

tumultuary levies, repaired the fortifications, and in short had every thing in readiness for action except energy and courage.

After a rendezvous at Hounslow Heath, the parliamentary seceders were welcomed by the excited soldiery with the loudest acclamations and the sincerest tokens of affection. A convention held at Sion House, whereat Fairfax and his superior officers assumed their seats in common with the members of both Houses, decided the whole question; and on the 6th of August the army entered London, without experiencing a shadow of resistance, their colours flying and their drums beating through the streets! — That same day the seceders were reinstated in their seats by the strong hand of military power; the General Fairfax was appointed constable of the Tower, and a thanksgiving voted with no dissentient voice either of peers or commons! Thus was the triumph of the independents finally determined, and themselves raised to power not soon again to fall.

It was the same day after the entrance of the army, that Sir Edgar Ardenne, elevated to the baronetcy by his father's death—who, though becoming gradually more and more doubtful of the purity of Cromwell's motives, had played his part as gallantly as heretofore throughout the long campaign of 46 and 47, and even shared in the deliberations and proceedings of the army as opposed to the yet darker machinations of the parliament—walked forth to seek for some

abuses of the church that he had warred, although he saw the latter in so clear a light that he felt no repugnance to make common cause with those who viewed them as the greater evils. Now, when the first oppressor was reduced, the first assailants of religious freedom beaten and trampled underfoot, it seemed too probable that a new hydra-headed tyranny would spring up from the downfallen despotism, and greater outrages on liberty of conscience follow, than those which had called England into arms.

Such was, indeed, the certain course of things if in the present struggle the parliament should regain the ascendancy—which body, it was evident, under the strong plea of necessity had already most alarmingly extended their boasted privilege, leaving all the assumptions of prerogative immeasurably in the rear, and which, now that the conflict was decided, showed little disposition to lay down their dear-bought power. Himself a follower of the church of England, Sir Edgar had seen little to find fault with in

the old establishment, save an over rigour and a want of toleration, which he would have extended to all sects, except the catholics, who were in those days truly formidable from their determinate spirit of conversion, their bigotry, and above all their undissembled inclination toward arbitrary government. He, therefore, looked upon the stern and overstrained morality of the presbytery with feelings of so deep dislike, that he would almost have surrendered all

Charles rendered his restoration all but impossible—while, in the deep-laid and unfathomable mysteries of Cromwell's course, Ardenne began to foresee daily, more and more cause for apprehension and for caution.

Still, such were the rare talents of the man' such his inexplicable influence over the minds of all whom he encountered, that while Sir Edgar doubted, he was compelled to grant that he had no cause for doubt, which he could make clear to himself, much less to others. At times he fancied his religious ecstasies mere hypocritic jargon, adopted so to mystify all eyes, and veil his deep ambition;—at others—and that too most soberly and often—he believed him a wild self-deceiving hypochondriac, an erring though sincere enthusiast.

Hitherto all that Oliver had done, had doubtless been of service to the cause of veritable freedom; and it was certain that his present opposition to the presbyterians *might* prove quite as unselfish—quite as beneficial to the

commonwealth, as his preceding opposition to the King. Still it was too apparent to escape the foresight of a politician so clear-headed and far-reaching as Sir Edgar, that if the military faction should gain firm foothold in the state, Cromwell would not lack either talent, opportunity, or power, to mount even to the topmost summit of ambition if he should feel the inclination to attempt it. And who, when all things most magnificently tempting shall lie

occupied a smaller house in Holborn, opening backward upon Lincoln's-inn.

It was a lovely evening as ever smiled upon the earth, which Ardenne had selected for his visit to the patriotic poet. The setting sun, that alchemist of nature, shone out so brilliantly from an unclouded sky, that even the great wilderness of walls and chimneys, for once seen through a purer medium than their accustomed canopy of fog and smoke, looked cheerfully. The same grave-eyed and sober-looking servitor, who had admitted him at his last visit six long years before, opened the door; and in reply to his inquiry informed him that Master Milton was within, but in his garden; and ushering him into a small parlour, decked with the selfsame dark-green hangings, offered to call his master. But declining his civility, Sir Edgar walked by himself into the narrow stripe of garden, planted with a few lilacs and laburnums all besmirched and dingy from the effects of the London atmosphere.

At first he saw not any thing of him he

sought; but in a moment after, he distinguished the full solemn voice, whose cadences, once heard could never be forgotten, proceeding from a little arbour facing the western sun, and covered by a mass of annual creepers, such as may easily be reared even upon the meanest plot of soil. The sounds, however, were not as of one engaged in conversation, but resembled rather the accents of a person thinking aloud, or possibly composing what might be afterwards committed to the safer guardianship of paper.

That which was most peculiar in the manner of the speaker, if, as Ardenne suspected, he were pronouncing thoughts, which for the first time now were couched in language, was that they flowed in one melodious and uninterrupted stream, unbroken by the slightest pause or hesitation, but running, as it were, into spontaneous melody, as unpremeditated as the music of a bird, the murmuring of a rivulet, or any other natural sound that sooths the ear. of man with untaught harmony.

He had not, however, much time to drink in the sweet and solemn verses; for the quick ear of the poet—quicker perhaps as his sense of vision year after year became less vigorous—detected an approaching footstep on the gravel walk; and ceasing instantly from his employment he stepped forth to meet his visiter.

The countenance of Milton was but little altered, embalmed as it were by his passionless and peaceful avocations, excepting that perhaps the furrows on his expansive forehead—furrows

of thought, not age—were somewhat deeper, and the whole expression of his lineaments more subdued and even melancholy than when they last met his friend's eye. The change, if change there were, was slight indeed as compared with the havoc which anxiety, grief, hardship, and exposure, more than time, had wrought on the fine features of Sir Edgar Ardenne. His glance was indeed bright as ever — his carriage as erect and dignified—his limbs as muscular, nay

either nostril downward. His hair, still soft and waving, was streaked in many places with premature and wintry gray, and, more than all, a dull dead shadow had settled down upon him with a gloom like that which an autumnal cloud will cast upon a landscape, that scarce a minute past was laughing in its sunniest loveliness.

At first sight Milton scarcely recognised his friend and pupil, and when at length he framed a half apology, attributing the blame to his own "great infirmity becoming," as he said, "as each morn rose on its preceding night, but more and more decided."

"I thank you," answered Ardenne, grasping the soft hand of the scholar-poet, with warm affection,—"I thank you for your kindly artifice; but I well know that hard seasons, and yet harder fortunes, have so far changed me, that, were my mother living, she scarce could recognise her son in the gray weather-beaten soldier that alone remains of him. But,

after all, what matters it?—what matters it, that our frail bodies should wear out and wither, when even thus they outlive empires!—But let us in—if I may so far trespass on your leisure—my mind is ill at ease, and I would fain cast off some of its secret burdens into ears which I know friendly, wise, and trustworthy."

Milton assented with a kindly but grave gesture; sympathizing more deeply than could have been expected from his unworldly habits and philosophic style of thought, in the appall-

"I have," he said, "methinks, more than a common claim on you for that advice and information, which I believe no man can so well afford me; seeing that it was owing mainly to your exhortations, that I determined on embarking actively upon that stream of circumstances, which has all blindly swept me onward to this pass. Obedient—or, I should rather say, convinced by those your exhortations, I have been, as you know, a faithful and unflinching—if unimportant—actor in the events which have dethroned the King, abolished the established church, and, to conclude, laid the whole realm—laws, liberties, and lives of Englishmen—at the precarious mercy of an armed and zealot multitude. In thus pursuing the dictates of *your* advice, not less than of *my* conscience, I devoted myself wholly to what I then believed my country's good. I have lost —sacrificed—every thing! I am alone among the ruins of my house—a sole and thunder-stricken column left standing when its temple

hath for ever fallen. My father died at Naseby, my only consolation that he forgot our differences, and blessed me ere he passed away. My betrothed bride—you saw her once in our young days of hope and promise, and know her priceless worth—is perishing by inches of a pined and broken heart. But this—ay! all this I could bear, were it not that dark fears have grown into my soul, till I doubt every thing—almost my own integrity and honour. A busy voice is whispering at my heart, that I have

fatally, held captive in the very palaces of his forefathers—her constitution plunged into the wildest jeopardy! All this I feel—I see. The havoc and the misery, the desolation and the peril! But when I would look forward, all is blank and hopeless. The worst view, anarchy in the state, and persecution in the church! For government—an army of sectarians and schismatics, fanatical and ignorant and savage! for council—a small knot of officers, wild visionary madmen, like Harrison and Lilburne—enthusiasts like Ireton—or hypocrites and mercenary knaves, like hundreds I *could* name, but need not! and for church—an austere, intolerant, morose, heart-chilling discipline—paralyzing every noble aspiration—condemning every innocent and lawful pleasure—hardening, and at the same time lowering, every heart—confounding every real standard, narrowing all distinctions between vice and virtue—converting men into mere hypocrites—or worse, into mere misanthropes, and brutes! This is the

darker side the picture. Turn it!—and the best view—truly the more I look upon it, the more sure do I feel that it will come to pass—the best view is the resurrection of a stronger dynasty—stronger, because supported by a standing army, founded upon a conquest, erected on the ruins of all that *did* oppose its predecessor, and *cannot* oppose *it*—a dynasty, with for its founder and its head, mightier and more dangerous a thousand fold than Charles—because more wise, more valiant, and more vir-

under the ores of the mine, by which he fits our corrupt bodies to put on incorruption!—Attention—for that, although I trust to show them baseless as the morning vapours which disappear before the all-pervading daylight, your prognostics are fraught deeply with the world's wisdom; and your views of the presbytery entirely sound and solid!—Wonder—that you should doubt, or anywise distrust, the purest and sincerest patriot—the most upright judge—the stoutest man of war—the trustiest and most painstaking Christian, that the Lord hath raised up, since the old days of Israel's glory, to vindicate the liberties, and wipe away the sorrows of an oppressed and groaning people."

"I rejoice much," Edgar replied, "to hear that such is your opinion. I cannot say indeed that I so much distrust *him*, as I do the tide of circumstances, which seem to flow on irresistibly toward his elevation. Charles never can again

sit on the throne—no party can place confidence in him—myself, I would not see him there; for whensoever he should fancy he had gained the power, so surely, as we two are here conversing now, would he renew these struggles. He is in heart—by habit—by his very blood, a despot. But let me profit by your wisdom—to what end do you look, whether for sorrow or rejoicing?"

"The lieutenant-general," answered Milton, "has gone hence but now—scarcely an hour

misjudged him. Restore Charles Stuart! I should have thought he would have stricken off his right hand sooner!"

"He would do so, however," Milton replied, "beyond all doubt he would. He deems he has devised a scheme to fetter him within the bounds of lawful power. Besides, he trusts his gratitude —mistaken trust, I fear me, on most unstable grounds. He parted hence almost in anger, for that I thwarted him, and held his project naught."

"And the terms?" asked Sir Edgar — What would be the terms on which he would restore him?"

"Certain improvements in the freedom of elections," returned the other, "and in the rights of parliament. The military power both by land and sea, and the creation of all great officers of state, to be for ten years vested solely in that body.—No person, who has warred against the parliament, to sit, for five years, whether as peer or commoner, or to hold any office.—No

peers created since the removal of the privy seal in '42, to sit without permission of both Houses. All grants made by the King, since that same date to be held void—all by the Lords and Commons valid. The liturgy not to be enjoined—nor yet the covenant enforced, but all coercive power to be taken from the bishops, and the clergy. The King, Queen, and the royal issue, except in these points, to resume all their old powers and prerogatives without restriction. And lastly, an indemnity

if the King might be trusted. But——I fear still. At all events the zeal of Cromwell to promote this settlement, argues that I have been unjust in my suspicions. Yes! I have greatly wronged him. But you said, that you differed from his views, and that he went hence ireful and chafing. I pray you tell me—what, then, are your opinions?"

"Mine?" replied Milton. "My opinions are but the musings of a solitary bookman, unskilled in court or council—neither a statesman, nor a politician; yet such as they be, you shall have them. I would see England free! free and unshackled, as was Rome in her fresh days of glory, ere she had bowed the knee to any Kaisar.—As Greece, when she spurned forth the countless myriads of the oriental king from her unviolated shores, and reared herself a bright example, pure and immortal, of liberty unquenched, unquenchable!—I would see England subject to law, to reason, and to God!—bending the neck to none—'rousing herself,

like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks!'—I would 'see her, as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam,' yea! spreading forth to the four winds of heaven her long-abused and fettered pinions, superbly floating in her pride of place, unscathed amid lightnings of the empyrean! And wherefore, I would ask you, not? Consider what we are, and have been—'a nation, not slow nor dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing

Roman war from its interior fastnesses, when Rome was at the mightiest!—a nation, that shall yet—once freed from the soul-galling yoke of monarchy, the spirit-killing sway of prelatists and peers and papists—send forth her arms, her laws, her language, and above all, the lights of her religion, to the remotest corners of the habitable earth, securely throned on her sea-circled pinnacle of glory, o'ershadowing the lands with her dominion, sweeping the ocean-waves with her renown!"

"Dreams! dreams!" replied Ardenne, shaking his head mournfully. "Beautiful! beautiful dreams, but baseless!—Methought that you had studied history more narrowly. There never has been, from the world's birth till now—there never shall be, henceforth to the day when the great trump shall sound—a true republic! Rome, when her kings were banished was an aristocracy—a wise, poor, frugal, brave, paternal *aristocracy*;—foot after foot her nobles yielded to the flood of what her demagogues styled

freedom — the moment when she became republican or democratic, which you will, that moment held her up a prize to the successful soldier. Her history thenceforth—corruption, anarchy, bloodshed, proscription, Cæsar! And what was Athens?—If for a little while she stood cemented by external wars which forced her to be single and united — what was her government, but a succession of bright usurpations — of aggressions on the people's rights, abuses of the people's power; till at the last de-

For you will hardly quote me Venice—Genoa—Florence—wherein not all a Petrarch's or an Ariosto's glory can veil the degradation of the slavish mob—the tyrannic insolence of the brute nobles. Dreams!—I say-once again—beautiful—but still dreams! Alas! for human nature! how can we look to see republics stand, unless we hope for wisdom and for virtue in the councils and the actions of the mass—how hope for these, when human reason and divine authority tell us alike, and tell us truly, that the majority of men are ignorant and prone to evil! But now, truce to discussion—you have relieved my mind at all events from one great dread—of having been in truth—while I supposed myself in some degree a champion of my country's weal—the mere tool of one man's ambition. This was the point, on which I chiefly sought your counsel, and I am satisfied. And now, let us to lighter and more pleasing matters.—I heard your voice, as I approached the arbour, composing as I fancied some new poem."

"A trifle! a mere trifle!" answered the other,
as if half-reluctant to descant on such a subject;
but Ardenne's end was gained—the thread of
their original discourse was broken, and, turning
thence to poetry and the chief literary topics o
the day, a conversation followed, which, thoug
of interest enough to those who held it, w
scarce of such importance as to warrant
transmission to posterity.

CHAPTER II.

Nay, be thou sure I'll well requite thy kindness,
For that it made my imprisonment a pleasure:
Ay, such a pleasure as incaged birds
Conceive, when, after many moody thoughts,
At last, by notes of household harmony,
They quite forget their loss of liberty.
But, Warwick, after God, thou set'st me free,
And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee.

King Henry VI.—Part III.

[T was a lovely summer morning, with a soft
it wind just ruffling the bosom of the silver
ames, and wantoning among the graceful
age of tall trees, and slender, though not less

beautiful exotics, which still adorn in such profusion the gardens of that palace built by the haughty Wolsey, but destined soon to pass into the hands of his bluff master, and to descend to his posterity as one of the most fair abodes of England's royalty.

In a magnificent apartment overlooking those unrivalled gardens, its ceiling gorgeously painted in Italian frescoes with some of the most picturesque creations of the Grecian fable, its walls draped with brocaded damask bordered with

looking up into his face as conscious of the melancholy air, which had become almost habitual to those unmarked but comely features, yet ignorant of the dark causes which had there imprinted it. The younger, Duke of Gloucester, and Elizabeth his little sister—just at that happy age when tears are as April showers succeeded instantly by smiles, when sorrows pass away and leave no sting behind—were busily employed imprisoning beneath a Venice goblet a painted butterfly, which, lured by a display of lovely summer flowers blooming in a large crystal vase upon the table, had flitted in through the tall casements but to be made a prize by the admiring children. A louder laugh than usual joyously bursting from the lips of the young girl diverted the King's mind for a moment from his sad reflections.

"My little girl," he said, half-sorrowfully smiling, "you would not persecute the pretty butterfly?—See how it beats its painted wings against the walls of its transparent prison, and

rubs off all the downy colours that you thought so beautiful. Know, my Elizabeth, that poor imprisoned fly would now be fluttering far, far away over the sunny gardens, in the sweet morning air, sipping the dew from every flower, happy and free; and you, by shutting it up here, have made it very wretched; and it will pine and die. See, it grows weak already. Would not my darling grieve for the poor butterfly, if she should find it lying dead upon its prison-floor to-morrow?"

"No, my sweet child," he answered, "it will revive directly; all that it wants is the fresh air, and liberty to go where it pleases."

"Then farewell, pretty butterfly," she cried, half weeping and half smiling, as she released the captive. "I should not love to be a prisoner myself. Go and be very happy. See! see! he is gone already!"

"Heaven, in its mercy, grant you never may, my child," Charles answered solemnly; "but if it should please God that evil men should shut you up, you must be very patient, and not hate those who hurt you, but forgive them, and say your prayers for them to your great King and Father in his holy heaven, that he may pardon them, and turn their hearts."

"Do you do so, papa?" she said. "Do you do so? For I heard you say one day that you were a prisoner—though this pretty room can hardly be a prison—for I thought a prison was a dark place underground, all barred with iron

grates, and very terrible. Do you forgive your enemies ?"

" Surely I do, my little girl," he answered, " else would not God forgive me. But now, go play—for see here, some one comes to speak with me," and as he said the words, the door was opened, and a gentleman-usher with his black rod entered the chamber, and informed the King, that the Lieutenant-general Cromwell was in the audience-chamber waiting his plea-

ing cabinet of ebony inlaid with ivory and silver.

Scarce had he settled himself, with perhaps some slight view to effect—when the independent entered. He was uncovered, bearing his beaver in his hand, and bowed low to the fallen sovereign, though he bent not the knee, nor offered any movement to kiss hands.

It was a singular and interesting meeting between two men, pitted by fortune for long years against each other, and now thrown peaceably into familiar contact. The contrast—the marked difference between the two—both great—but the one born to greatness, the other having by the energies of his own mind, the actions of his own right hand, achieved it.

Their features spoke volumes as to the distinction! The King's were indeed comely and full of a calm natural majesty, but bearing no decisive marks of any ruling principle or passion—no radiancy of intellect—no manifest impress of character!—mild, though at the

same time somewhat stern, their chief expression was an air of cold and melancholy resolution, not perhaps inconsistent with the traits of mind, for which he was remarkable. When gazed upon, indeed, by one who knew him as the King, he looked it every inch; but had he been met in a crowd, attired as a private individual, he would have been observed for nothing but the easy bearing, natural to every high-born gentleman.

The countenance of Cromwell, on the con-

garb of the every-day staid citizen—or the vile tatters of the mendicant, he could not for a second's space have remained unnoted, as a superior creature—as a man of vast unquestionable powers.

But if, in this respect, the carver out of his own mighty fortunes, surpassed the owner of legitimate hereditary sway—in bearing and demeanour there was no comparison. Every position, every movement of the king was redolent of ease and dignity combined; and his repose—that hardest test of grace—carelessly natural and unstudied, was as perfect in its harmony and keeping, as if it had been the result of the most artful skill. The motions of the independent, on the other hand, were sudden, rapid, rough; his postures rigid and iron, when erect, when seated, angular at any time and awkward, but so more obviously when brought into relief by the contrast to the elegance of Charles.

Both were dressed simply, for their station in society, the King especially, who would have been

outshone at first sight by the poorest noble of his court. He wore a plain suit of black taffeta, crossed by the broad blue ribbon of the Garter, silk stockings of the same colour, with satin roses in his shoes, and a short mantle of black velvet. His sword was a plain mourning rapier with a hilt of jet; but the deep falling collar round his neck was of the finest Brussels point, and the star on the left side of his cloak glittered with diamonds of the purest water.

Cromwell, who, as he rose in dignity and

"I give you good day, sir," said Charles, in answer to the low reverence of Cromwell. "We are well pleased to see you, the rather that we owe you thanks, for that, as we have learned, by your warm intercession with the parliament, our children have been yielded to our prayers."

"Verily," answered Cromwell,—"verily, if it please your highness, I hold this matter no just cause for thanks, seeing that—as myself a father, whom the Lord hath vouchsafed to bless with a fair progeny, and as a Christian man, who, having learned that we should do to others as we would have it done to us, strives still to put in practice that which he has learned—I have but done my duty. Permit me to hope rather that it may be my fortune, in the time to come, in such degree to minister unto your majesty's advancement and wellbeing, as may deserve not *your* thanks only, but those of this distracted realm."

"Nevertheless, we thank you, sir," returned Charles with a smile seemingly sincere and natural, "both for the good which you have

done to us already, and that which you profess your will to do hereafter. We will speak more at length, when we shall be alone—and, in good time, here comes fair mistress Drummond. Good Drummond,"—he addressed the lady, who now entered—"we will, if you be now at leisure, trespass so far upon your time as pray you to bestow your care upon these little ones. James," he said, turning to the Duke of York, "if Sir John Berkeley be at liberty to wait on you, you have my license to ride forth; but see you be not

"Mildmay and Henry Gage—so please you."

"Send Mildmay to the head of the great stairs, let Gage wait at the entrance of the painted gallery, and you bestow yourself in the fourth window hence. Suffer not any one to pass the stairs, nor interrupt us upon any plea of pleasure or of business.—Business!" he added, now addressing Cromwell, who had remained standing hat in hand—"We will to business, sir; for that, I trow, has gained for me the pleasure of this visit. I pray you sit—nearer the table if it please you." And drawing forth some papers from the cabinet before him, he pursued them rapidly as if in search of some peculiar passage.

"Has your grace found the leisure," Cromwell asked, "to overrun the schedule of conditions, which my son-in-law, Colonel Ireton, had the honour to submit to your attention?"

"I have, and carefully," answered the King; —"and on the whole, since as it seems I may not now do better, I am contented to abide

by them. One thing, and one alone, if possible, I would have stricken out or modified. Tis the last article, I mean—this one relating to the five delinquents. I cannot—no I cannot, on any terms, surrender friends, whose only crime has been their love to me—their firm adherence to my fortunes—their sacrifice of all that men hold dearest, to prop the falling fabric of their master's greatness. No, I cannot surrender them to death—to meet such a death as this! I were no

times crave very wary walking! From parliament—as I believe your highness has discovered heretofore—nought can be hoped. They will not treat at all, save on the utter abolition of the church of England—that form to which your grace is, as I well believe—(and wherefore should you not? since to all men there cannot be one faith or one opinion, more than one tone of voice or set of features)—religiously and conscientiously attached—and the establishment, throughout the land, of their presbytery."

"Never! I never will consent to it," exclaimed the King. "I will die sooner!"

"Save on these terms, however, they will never treat," Cromwell replied. "I have—I do profess it to your grace—I have laboured with my whole soul and spirit, wrestling in your behalf, and for your friends' advantage—and, truly I scruple not to say it, I hold there is not one among the presbyterian faction that will consent to a firm peace, while there be any bishops in the land."

"I do believe," said Charles,—"I do, indeed, believe that you have stood my friend of late; and I do thank you for it, and well I hope the time shall come when I can compensate your good deeds to the full."

"Your majesty may so say well," Cromwell replied impressively. "I have stood forth somewhat too boldly; so that I have, I grieve to say it, but verily the truth must be spoken always, —so that I have fallen into some suspicion even among my veteran soldiery—so that they scoff

Greatly distrusting the rogue presbyterians, and striving often and sincerely with the Lord in spirit, that it would please him to replace your majesty in the dominion, and upon the throne of your forefathers. But when you last gave audience to the adjutators—(surely it is a grievous thing to say—but I profess to you, as the Lord liveth, it is true)—all their trust in your highness passed away—and all the favour you had met with in their eyes, even as morning clouds when that the south wind chaseth them. Yea! and their hearts were hardened, and their countenances changed against you, and against all they deem your friends. Moreover secretly have I—ay, even I myself—been now advised by letters from tried friends, and otherwise, that threats are rife against me in the camp, how they would lay wait privily, and dig a pit, and set a snare before me, and take and smite me with the sword, and slay me under the cloud of night. But, as I live, they know me not who do suppose that my fear of that which man can

do to me shall turn me from performing that which I have tasked my spirit to accomplish. Truly, these terms which now lie here before your majesty, with much of danger and yet more of difficulty, have I prevailed upon the host to offer you. If that it seem good to you to accept them I pledge myself right gladly that the parliament shall, ere long, consent likewise—for lo, the army is the mightier! But if (which I trust will not be the case) you shall determine to reject them—then do I wash my hands

blunt honesty of your stout soldiers, than chaffer for conditions, as for vile merchandise, with the cold cozening presbyterians;—and for your own part, trust me when I say, that next to the Almighty, with reverence be it spoken, I hold *you* the instrument that hath uplifted me from the abyss of sorrow, and wrought for me a deliverance and restoration! And I assure you there shall be a time, when you will own me grateful."

"This then is settled," Cromwell replied. "I may announce unto the host your majesty's unqualified assent to these their propositions?"

"You are at liberty to do so," returned Charles; "for myself, from this hour I hold me bound to them."

"Right joyful am I!" exclaimed Oliver. "All thanks be to the Lord of Hosts—England shall then have peace! Verily, ere ten days be passed, your majesty shall sit in state at Westminster."

"And my first deed, when there," said Charles, "in guerdon of your much-esteemed and faithful services, shall be to raise my well-

beloved and trusty Cromwell to the peerage under the title, now extinct, of Earl of Essex, and to grace him with the garter of St. George, which never yet was buckled round the knee of braver leader.—The parliament, I trow, will not object to honours thus bestowed on their best general—nor to my commending him to the command of England's armies!"

"Your majesty is gracious," answered the independent, in a tone half indignation and half irony; "but not to be made Prince of Wales,

and suffered; and did I not believe your majesty resolved, henceforth to hold the liberties and weal of all your subjects nearest to your heart, and the fear of the Lord, alway before your eyes —verily, withered be my arm, and my tongue palsied, if I would strike one blow, or syllable one sound to save you from perdition! But now this matter is so happily arranged, may it please your grace excuse me. My duties call me hence to Windsor, where I should be by noon!"

"Duty, sir, needs no licence," Charles replied, smiling most graciously, and rising from his seat and even taking three steps toward the door, as the blunt soldier moved to leave the presence; "and till we meet at Westminster, rest in the full assurance of possessing your liege sovereign's gratitude and favour.—Ha!" he continued, as the door closed and he found himself alone—"Deep as he is, I have out-generalled him.—Now he suspects not any thing—Ha! ha! the garter and the Earl of Essex—a precious clown in faith to grace an earldom!—But now

or Lauderdale and Hollis!—the dull fools—we will outwit them all, and yet reign, as our father did before, a king in something more than name!"

But the enthusiast strode forth, the tessellated floor of the proud gallery ringing beneath his massive stride, exulting and triumphant; and as he passed the vestibule, where there were none to mark his actions, he clasped both his hands above his head, and cried out in a voice husky and stifled with emotion, "My country—oh

CHAPTER III.

Let us see—
Leave, gentle wax; and manners blame us not:
To know our enemies' mind we'd rip their hearts;
Their papers is more lawful.

King Lear.

THE third day after Cromwell's interview :h Charles, Ardenne, who had purchased a all house in the Strand, with pleasant gardens ping to the river, making it his continual ode when not engaged in military duties, was lking on the terrace close to the water's edge one of those abstracted and half-melancholy ods, which had become almost habitual to n, except when circumstances calling for

was moored, a stern voice, whose accents of command he recognised at once, rose from the misty river, above the plashing of the oars which had been for some time approaching.

"Ho! put in here, thou stupid knave—here at this private stair; 'tis here we would be landed."

It was, he could not be mistaken, the voice of Cromwell; and immediately the sharp beak of a wherry ran upon the steps, pulled by two watermen, with two more men, soldiers it seemed, reclining in the stern. Oliver (for one was indeed he) leaped out forthwith and addressed Edgar hastily, as if afraid that he should speak first, and in a tone so loud that it was evident he wished the boatmen to hear what he said.

"Is not this, I beseech you the dwelling of the brave Colonel Ardenne? We have come hither from the army—two of the adjutators—to bear tidings to him."

"It is, sir," Edgar replied, quickly comprehending Cromwell's wish, "and I am Colonel

tucks with iron scabbards hanging from their buff belts and clattering on the pavement as they strode along, and broad-brimmed hats of felt, the flaps unlooped, and covering their brows as if to guard against the weather. They both were furnished with tobacco-pipes—short dingy iron tubes—and smoked almost incessantly, as well to cloud their features, as to afford a plausible excuse for silence. But, as a further safeguard against inquiring eyes, Cromwell had cast about him a stained and weather-beaten dragoon cloak of frieze, with its cape muffling him well-nigh to the mouth.

Ireton carried in his hand a package of some size wrapped in an oilskin cover; and on a casual meeting even an intimate acquaintance would have detected nothing in their air or manner, by which to judge them different from what they seemed.

The moment they had entered—"Let your domestics instantly take arms," said Cromwell, "and lay these watermen by the heels; they might blab else, although I think they know us

not. Let your trusty steward alone attend us; and bid them see your doors be locked, and that no one of our attendants, on any pretext, this night cross the threshold."

Leading his guests himself into a small library, retired from the street and looking out upon the garden, Edgar went out to give his orders. Before returning he had seen the boatmen, after a slight struggle, secured in a remote chamber, with an abundance of strong liquor which he judged rightly would at once console

brought over; the parliament must come to our terms. So far all's well. But with the dawn to-day a letter came to me at Windsor—from one who has conveyed us much intelligence, and never has deceived us—a friend in the King's bed-chamber—*verbum sat*; he writes us that Charles Stuart hath been all yesterday in deep debate with Ashburnham, that firebrand of the Queen's —that their resolves are taken—and a letter—of a surety in cipher—but then we hold the key, the Lord be thanked for it—prepared for Henrietta, to be conveyed right cunningly this night to Dover, by an unconscious messenger. What the contents may be, our friend might not discover, though, as he writes, he left no stone unturned; but of this he is certain, that it is all-important, and decisive of the King's intention as to the pending treaty. This letter we *must* intercept; and, therefore, we rode straight in this disguise to Brentford, and thence took boat, to baffle prying eyes; and so far all goes rightly. Now attend—the bearer of this letter will come

elbows of the doublet, an
trunk hose guarded with
stammel waistcoat, and a r
hat, which is of common str
be old and somewhat patc
in the off-side flap, between t
the letter is concealed. T
that it is there, deeming he
hunting-horse from one Jo
courser. He is to put up
in Dover, and there will be
scription, who shall search t
nothing!—for WE must h
How goes the night, Sir Ed
"Past seven, I am sure—
at his watch—"but it lack

"Nay, then, we are but just in time—you will go with us, sir, and aid us. We must have three, and know none else in whom we may so perfectly rely. You are aware that Charles is on parole not to hold secret intercourse with France—his parole broken, there is no breach of honesty or honour in seizing and perusing his despatches.—That package—open it quickly Ireton—contains a dress like these that we now wear—the uniform of one who hath about your inches, borrowed for the nonce. It savours somewhat of tobacco-smoke and stale october, but we must not be nice. I pray you don it speedily. Nay, Ireton, you forget, where is the net to gather up his lovelocks, and the peruke? Quick!—quick!" he cried impatiently, binding up Edgar's flowing hair, and covering it with a foxy wig, close-clipped, and cut into a hundred little peaks.

Some pigment was now laid on Edgar's whiskers, and mustaches, suiting them to the colour of his false hair. A kerchief of coarse cotton next replaced his collar of fine lace, and a garb

own military boots, careful
sion and fitted with roug
unpolished headpiece, com

"Mind now your bearin
they left the house; "an
jostle a little those whom
streets, and quote the str
remember. When that
great gate will be closed,

We will all enter in, a
nine of the clock; then g
some errand—loiter abou
see our man; follow in a
passeth up the yard—for h
stables—bar instantly the
Now let us move on quick

quarters which, though now the very heart and the most populous portion of the giant city, were then but sparsely built upon, with frequent gardens intervening between the scattered tenements, and miry lanes unlighted and unpaved instead of regular streets.

The night continued dark, and so unpleasant that when they reached at length the mighty thoroughfare of Holborn, the street was half deserted and nearly silent. Smoking much as they passed along, and speaking little, they reached the well-known hostelry. Its gate, as Cromwell had foreseen, was closed and locked, but a low wicket-door gave ingress to the yard; a long irregular space surrounded on three sides by the rambling buildings of the inn, with three tiers one above the other of open galleries, through which was the access to the chambers,—and bounded at the end by a long range of granaries and pack-stables. The yard was nearly dark—for but one lamp shone dimly over the entrance of the public room, just at the left hand of the

gateway as they entered; and except the lanterns of the hostlers flitting about the farther buildings, no other lights were visible within; but, as if to make up for the deficiency, a large glass lamp on either side the gateway rendered the street in front of it as light as day.

Abruptly entering the tap-room in which were some four or five grave-looking citizens, comforting themselves after the business of the day with poached eggs and canary, buttered ale,

Ireton answered. "Verily, good man, he was upheld most marvellously—four hours did he hold forth steadily, not waxing faint in flesh, nor weary in well-doing, but borne along in spirit with exceeding fervour, and his voice ringing like a trumpet, louder at every close. Truly a second Boanerges!"

"Ay! and he touched with the true unction on that hard rock that splits all weaker vessels, the full justification of the soul by faith—the utter needlessness of works to save, when that the soul is filled,—ay as a tankard that doth overflow its brim—(and lo! my can is out. Ho! tapster, fill us the good black gallon jack, and fetch us more tobacco)—or as a mill-dam that doth burst its banks with the true grace of God!"

"Yea!" answered Ireton,—"yea! verily he did; but I bethought me somewhat, that he o'ershot the mark, when he did undertake to prove that those who have been once in grace

earth and infamy—and though we should not judge—judgment hereafter and perdition. Thus in the soul is the distinction, it maketh its own righteousness—it maketh its own sin! All that is done for virtue, becomes virtue. To whom all things *seem* pure, verily all *are* pure! Yea if a man have the grace given him to look upon what to the unregenerate would be the darkest and most damning sin, and to believe it lawful—verily then to him it *would* be lawful!"

He continued thus, plunging into the wildest and most bewildering depths of metaphysics, half acting, as it seemed to Edgar, an unreal character, and half believing what he said. While Ireton, an enthusiast in politics, but sober and clear-headed in religious matters as compared with others of his class, kept up the conversation merely to play the part assigned to him; and Edgar—who, as Cromwell had once said in his defence against some who had termed him cavalier and half-malignant, had not the gift to preach or pray, yet had the gift

to counsel more advisedly, and fight more fearlessly than any sniveller of them all—joined not at all in the discourse, but smoked his pipe and drained his horn in silence, till the appointed time arrived,—when, making some excuse to his companions, he left the tap-room, and strolled out into the street.

Here he lounged carelessly about, now gazing vacantly into the lighted window of some cook-shop, now feigning some attempt at gallantry toward such wandering damsels as had neither

but without one gleam of intellect in his broad jovial face—the last man in the world one would have taken for a spy or trusted emissary. This Edgar saw, as he passed by him near a lighted shop. He suffered him to get some dozen paces in advance, and then with a slow sauntering gait pursued him. He saw him stoop beneath the wicket, and, without looking to the right or left, walk up the yard toward a group of hostlers, playing at odd or even on a horseblock round a dingy lantern. Silently and unseen he dropped the bar across the wicket, and looked into the tap-room.

"Tarry," said Cromwell,—"tarry yet a while —the bird is ours!"

In a few minutes the sound of a horse's hoofs were heard upon the pavement.

"Now then," cried Oliver. "Now!" and instantly unsheathing his long tuck, he darted through the doorway, followed immediately by Ireton and Sir Edgar, likewise with drawn swords.

"Oh! turn thy pockets out. Surely we will not be too hard with thee. Well! well! this is a purse—good lack! a heavy one! and this a letter—'to Master Styles, horse-courser, Dover!' Look sharply, that he be not too deep for thee, this John Styles—he played our colonel Whalley a foul trick with a spavined jade some two years past. He is a keen blade. Well!—this is a pipe—and this a bacca-box—so! so! in these there is no treason. Truly I said thou wert an honest fellow; and I was not deceived. Another cup of ale? Tush! never mince the matter, 'twill warm thee more than thy plush jerkin—Upseyes! So! down with it like lambs-wool. Well thou mayest go now, so thou wilt not tarry and have a rouse with us. Ho! Fast-and-Pray, bring out the worthy fellow's horse; he is not such as we be sent to look for, and—now I think of it—our time of watch is ended!"

A quick glance interchanged with his son-in-law, assured the general that the letter was

hastily upon it, and exclaiming, "Nay, it is not in cipher!" read thus aloud:

"Dearest and best Marie,

"I have received your kind and most consoling letter of July, from the tried friend who bore it. The wisdom of your counsels I acknowledge, and, so far as in *me* lies, will follow them. But trust me, girl, better and brighter days are yet in store for us. I do assure you, I am even now more King—more powerful and free—than ere I raised my standard; so that I doubt not, with a little patience, and a small share of *finesse*, all shall be yet as we would have it. I am now courted by all parties—English and Scottish—presbyterians, independents—parliament and army—all prostrate at my feet—all rivals for my favour, and balanced, too, so equally, that whom I join soever carries the day. In truth, chiefly do I incline toward the Scots; but for the present seem for my own purposes to favour more the army. In the end, whosoever bids the highest, has me. You disapprove, you tell

With a calm voice, though bitter in the extreme and scornful, Cromwell read out this document. Ireton's[1] eyes flashed fire, and, as his father-in law ended, he violently dashed his hand upon the table—

"Whose dogs are we!" he cried in fierce and ringing tones, "that we should be thus scandalously dealt with? As the Lord liveth, he shall die the death!"—

"But three days since," said Cromwell—"hypocrite that he is! base knave, and liar!—he proclaimed, through me, his full acceptance of the army's terms—his last words were, 'and for myself henceforth I hold me bound by them!' And I, fool that I was, *I* did rejoice and triumphed in my heart, that England should have peace!—And now—he will *hang* both of us! ay, HANG!—Can there be any trust in such a man?"—

"None!" answered Edgar, mournfully—"There can indeed be none!—It is long since I have even dreamed there could! He is unstable

as the sands of the sea-shore, and false—as fortune !"

"Alas !—alas ! for England !" Oliver exclaimed in deep impressive tones—"If it be thy will, Mighty Lord, that this thy servant be a prey and victim to this man of Belial, truly I am prepared. But for this godly and regenerate land, for this oppressed and miserable people, in whose behalf, already many times, thou hast displayed the wonders of thy might—the mira-

the people, and that the whole nation perish not!"

"This bold speech, for that night, ended the debate. Cromwell was silent—though the remarkable and resolute compression of his own mouth, and the deep frown that furrowed his high forehead, and the determined gleam of his hard eye, showed that his silence was produced by anything rather than doubt or fear.

Ardenne, at this last and heaviest blow, was, for the moment, wholly overcome. He saw the certain peril, the imminent and overwhelming ruin, but he saw neither refuge, nor escape. He felt that, while Charles lived, England could never be at rest—but he did *not* feel that his death would give her that repose, which she desired, now more almost than liberty.

In gloom that evening they had met—in deeper gloom they parted—save Ireton alone, who seemed elate and almost joyous;—for, fraught with a sincere unselfish patriotism that would not have disgraced an ancient Roman—a

wild and daring theorist—a confident and bold believer in the perfectibility of man, and in the supreme excellence of democratic forms—he fancied that he now foresaw the advent of his dearest wishes—the overthrow of monarchy and aristocracy for ever—the birth of a sea-girt republic—the creation of a British state, unequalled in the annals of the world!—more wise and eloquent than the free Athens!—in morals more severe than Sparta!—in grace more elegant than Corinth!—in empire, arms, and glory, more mag-

CHAPTER IV.

I have advertised him by secret means,
That if, about this hour, he make this way,
Under the colour of his usual game,
He shall here find his friends with horse and men
To set him free from his captivity.

King Henry IV.

SADLY and wearily the year wore onward; the lden days of summer were already passed, the .ves, which had so greenly flourished a few weeks fore, grew sear like human hopes, and were irled wildly from their hold by each succeed- ; blast. Autumn had waned already into nter, yet still the leaders of the army, after

many from personal attachment to their young leader, whose neighbours or whose tenants a great portion of them were—many from a sense of political oppression—but none from any feeling of fanaticism or religious fury (the most part being of the episcopal persuasion)—they looked on unconcerned, while their companions were indulging in the loudest tumults, and reposed all their trust in the high talents and integrity of their commander.

Oftentimes since the memorable evening of the intercepted letter, Cromwell and Ardenne had debated on the next step to be taken, and on the future prospects of their country! And both had often grieved at their inability to shape out any course, by which they might hope confidently to eschew the breakers, which they could see directly in their track. Both clearly saw that the King's union with the presbyterians could but be the beginning of a worse tyranny, both in the church and state, than that which they had overthrown;—and both saw likewise

either the presbyterian influence, which they now chiefly feared, prevail — or one strong-handed military tyrant rise from the chaos of licentious freedom.

Ireton, in the mean time, the leader of a powerful faction, declared at all times his desire for a republic, founded upon a general franchise of the whole people; and Harrison, who represented a yet more fanatical and phrensied party, calling themselves fifth monarchists, looked forward to the near approach of the millennium, and arrogating to themselves an absolute perfection, claimed an equality of rights — of power — and of property — for all men.

Meantime all alike agreed on the expedience of awaiting the recurrence of some overt action on the part of Charles, or of the presbyterians; and for this they had not indeed long to tarry; for on the morning of the twelfth day of November, the gentlemen whose office was to wait upon his chamber, found that the King was not

generally dreaded, that the King was in hiding somewhere, within the city—that the presbyterian party and the royalists had privily united, and that a sudden rising would ensue, and massacre all opposed to it.

An act passed instantly prohibiting, on pain of death and confiscation, any from harbouring the King without conveying notice to the parliament. Expresses were sent off to every sea-port-town, laying a strict embargo on all vessels, and every person who had fought on the King's side in the late wars was banished from the city and any other place within a circuit of ten miles round London.

Meanwhile the hapless monarch, having ridden day and night toward the south-western coast, frustrated by the mismanagement, or, as some say, the treachery of Ashburnham, in his desire of taking ship from the New Forest, sought refuge for a space at Titchfield House, in Hampshire; and, finally, with an incomprehensible degree of folly, surrendered himself to

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of the Isle of Wigh

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Charles, while yet
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treat with him now at all. These he at once refused, and was in consequence committed into closer custody, means being taken by the removal of his royalist attendants, and otherwise, to frustrate any attempts at a new flight.

At the same time the Scotch commissioners went down with the conditions he had at Hampton Court indignantly rejected, by which they should engage to invade England with sufficient force to establish him upon the throne; but on condition that the prince and queen should presently repair to Scotland—that the presbytery and church-directory should be at once enforced throughout all England, and that a large proportion of the northern counties should be ceded to the sister kingdom. And in that moment of despair, these crafty plotters prevailed with him to sign and ratify that secret treaty—a treaty as injurious as degrading to his English subjects, and far more rigorous, in restrictions on himself, than the much easier

terms which his unalterable hatred and contempt of parliaments had led him peremptorily to refuse.

On the fifteenth of the same month, a statement of the King's escape, his present secure situation, and the propositions tendered to him by the parliament, was sent down to the army; with a remonstrance ably penned by Fairfax, refuting the strong calumnies which had been cast against the principal commanders, and setting forth the motives of their conduct

certed and connived at by the *grandees* of the host, were in a state of turbulence, bordering closely upon actual mutiny.

It was about eleven of the clock on a bright frosty morning, that Cromwell with his small life-guard reached Ware. Causing his trumpets to sound through the streets, he summoned all the regiments to get themselves together orderly upon the green, to hear a proclamation from the lord-general; and ere this summons had been well delivered, they turned out, not indeed orderly, or in good discipline, but in loud and tumultuous disarray. They were all under arms, although expressly contrary to orders; two regiments especially of musketeers who had their caps adorned with ribands inscribed, as a motto of insubordination, with the words, 'For the people's freedom, and the soldier's right,' were observed to be in full field order, with their bandoleers slung round them, and the matches of the arquebuses lighted.

Among these, as Cromwell advanced slowly

toward them, accompanied by Ardenne only, and followed at a little distance by a dismounted captain's guard, with drawn swords, but no fire-arms—the remainder of the regiment halting in line a little further in the rear—a wild disorganizing shout arose, "Equality of rights! Equality of rights! No King! no coalition! Down with the false grandees!"

But when with his long sturdy strides, and his stern features perfectly calm, but resolute and hard as if they had been cast in iron, he

instantly," he added in a tone somewhat louder, yet so severe and passionless that one battalion obeyed on the moment, "those matches!—How dare ye muster thus?—Out of your caps with those unsoldierly and villain mottoes—out with them! Nay! but ye shall trampel them beneath your feet!"

And awed by his immovable determination the same battalion once again complied; while the great bulk of that tumultuous assembly looked on in abashed wonder, and ordering as rapidly as possible, their unmilitary and ill-dressed front, assumed an air of perfect discipline and a right soldierly demeanour.

Not so the second regiment—for, brandishing their arms aloft, they raised a deep and scornful murmur, increasing gradually into a shout of absolute defiance. Nay, some brought down their arquebuses to the ready movement, and even cocked them; but not one man removed the motto of rebellion.

It was a moment of anxiety, if not of real

peril; for, though the great mass of the men were quiet, they yet wore an air of sullen, and almost savage discontent, which clearly showed their temper, and made it but too probable that any overt action of one troop, even, would kindle the whole body into a sudden blaze of fury.

"Heard ye not?" Oliver proceeded, in a voice pitched several notes below his usual key, but so full of intense resolve, of quiet but indomitable spirit, that it thrilled to the hearts of

fiercely, and at his word again the murmurs ceased; but brief and trivial as they were, those murmurs had yet roused anew a spirit of resistance in the bosom of the half-terrified ringleader. Silent he stood indeed, but his mouth worked convulsively, a red flush overspread his countenance, and his hand quivered, as it grasped the barrel of his musket.

"Soh! thou art then a soldier," continued Cromwell, once more confronting the delinquent. "Now then pull forth that rascal riband from thy cap!—cast it, I say, into the dust, and set thy foot upon it!"

The man spoke not, but bit his lip until the blood spirted forth; moving, however, no limb or muscle of his body, whether to execute or to resist his officer's command.

"Do as I bid thee, dog!"—and with a flash of furious and ungovernable ire lighting up every feature of his face, Cromwell stamped his heel on the turf as though he was in the act of trampling down a living foeman.

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Ardenne dashed forward sword in hand, followed by six or eight of his most active men, while his lieutenant shouted to the horsemen in the rear to charge! Yet, had their aid been needed, the career of Oliver had been concluded on that day in a poor paltry riot—but it was not needed! For in the very act of capturing the one, that keen-eyed and quick-witted leader observed the motion of the other mutineer! Before the heavy din, with which the armour of the first clanged as he fell was ended, his broadsword gleamed aloft in the bright sunshine—down, it came whistling through the air—down, like a flash of lightning, and, with his skull cleft through his headpiece to the chin, the second plunged head foremost, a dead man ere he touched the earth, his arquebuse discharged, though harmlessly, by the convulsed and quivering fingers after the life had left the body.

Cromwell paused not for a second's space to suffer them to rally or recover from the consternation, which had fallen on them with all the

chilling influence of a panic terror, but, "Charge!" he shouted in a voice of thunder—"Charge the rebellious dogs! Kill! kill! spare none who dare resist!"—

With the word Ardenne rushed in, and faithfully his gallant men requited the trust placed in their allegiance. Firmly as though they had outnumbered their opponents, that little handful dashed into the breach which Cromwell's energy had made already in the rebellious ranks; and at a full trot, with their rapiers levelled to the

advantage. But scarcely was his second cry in time; for, though they curbed their chargers as the word reached their ears, the cavalry stopped not until their horses' chests were close upon the wavering ranks, and their long rapiers waving o'er their heads.

"Draw off your horse, Lieutenant Winthrop," he continued, "advance two files of infantry, arrest each tenth man of the lance-pesades through this battalion—verily they shall learn, and that right speedily, what be the fruits of mutiny. Officers to the front—call a drum-head court-martial!"

Not a man stirred, and not a weapon was advanced, as one by one the decimated prisoners were arrested. Before five minutes had passed over, ten or a dozen officers had assembled to perform the saddest and most painful duty that ever falls even to a soldier's lot. The crime had been too flagrant—the proof too evident—the peril too immediate to admit of lenity; and without one dissenting voice the fatal sentence was

pronounced on all the wretched criminals, some five or six in number, who, now disarmed and bound, stood waiting the award in speechless agony.

"A file for execution!" Oliver exclaimed, in his most harsh and grating tones, "draw out a file for execution from that same regiment! Lead forth that fellow, whom I seized myself —he was the very foremost of them all, and may not hope for mercy! This grace will I accord the rest—they shall cast lots among them: but one

ment of intense and shuddering pain, even to those who in comparative indifference were mere spectators of the scene; what must it then have been to those, of whom one certainly was destined to be sent, from the fair face of the bright laughing earth, unhouselled and unshriven, into the presence of his Maker, with scarce a moment even to prepare the spirit for endurance of the fearful shock which should disjoin it from the body.

The lottery of death was ended!—The soldier whose hard fate had been thus chance-decided, was a small, delicate, pale-looking man—of a weak frame, and a countenance effeminate, and betokening any thing save energy of mind or resolution. Yet was this frail and nerveless being perfectly cool and self-collected; while his companion—taken in the very fact—limbed like a Hercules, with high bold features and a brilliant eye—a man who would have ridden fearlessly, although alone, upon a stand of levelled pikes, or rushed upon a cannon's mouth just as the linstock was applied—shook like an aspen-leaf through all

his last stand on earth,
for mercy.

With an air perfectly c
the other threw aside his
unbound the kerchief from
a token to a favorite fello
in a clear unfaltering voice,
of his sentence, and exhort
take warning from his fate,
to those who had condemne
lightly to the place of ex
were his choice to die.

There they stood, side b
health and intellect, and lif
short moment to be mere
unconscious clay—and there

do the work of blood, the firing party chosen from the ranks of their own regiment!—composed perhaps of messmates, of familiar friends, of proved associates in many a scene of peril and of glory—perhaps of comrades, plotters,—instigators to the very crime which *they* were destined to avenge, *their friends* to expiate, their partners without doubt in this last fatal deed of guilt, and now their executioners!

The regiments were drawn up, forming three sides of a great hollow square, the criminals upon the fourth, the executioners already facing them at scarce ten paces distant. There was not a voice—a sigh—a movement in that mighty concourse; not a weapon clashed, not a foot rustled on the earth. But the sun shone in glorious beauty upon the burnished pike-heads and the waving standards; and the whole earth looked gay and smiling—more gay, more smiling, as it seemed to the poor criminals, than ever it had been before.

A short extemporaneous prayer was uttered

by the captain of their own battalion—a sad and doleful hymn was chanted by the now penitent and terrified assemblage, with a sound inexpressibly and strangely doleful. The fatal sign was given!—a bright flash, and a sharp report as of a single piece!—and when the smoke cleared off, there lay the bodies on the sod, lifeless and motionless, their sins and sorrows thus simultaneously and suddenly concluded.

There was no need of more severity; and the quick eye of Cromwell saw it. With the yet

for the mercy he had shown them in taking but two lives where all so righteously were forfeit.

After a few more words of reprimand, blended with commendations of their former services and exhortations never to offend in the like sort hereafter, Oliver, whose point was amply gained, dismissed the soldiers; and the bands striking up in the impressive notes of a dead march, with colours trailed and arms reversed, they filed off to their several quarters, well convinced now that howsoever their commanders might connive at disobedience to the parliament, they would in no sort tolerate or wink at the most trivial mutiny against their own authority.

In fact, by his undaunted resolution in suppressing, and his inflexible severity in punishing the present disaffection, joined to the partial lenity he had extended to his prisoners, Cromwell had more than regained all that he had temporarily lost in the opinions of the army. Never, perhaps, at any previous time had he stood higher in power, or possessed more fully

the respect and admiration, not unmixed with wholesome fear, of those whom he commanded, than at the present moment.

The next night, in the most magnificent of England's palaces, in the great hall of Windsor Castle, the officers of that victorious army, which had not merely conquered but annihilated the high faction of the cavaliers, defeated the intrigues of the Scotch presbyterians, seen through and cut asunder, if they had not disentangled, the Gordian knot of parliamentary chicane,

should be arraigned, and brought to answer for his deeds before the high court of the nation in parliament assembled.

It was remarked even then, and deeply pondered on in after-days, as something singular and strange, by Ardenne (who was not present at the council, having remained in London on his return from Ware, but who was instantly apprized of the proceedings), that neither before that assemblage, nor publicly at any other time, did Oliver urge on or advocate with his accustomed fervour, the measure which, as Sir Edgar knew full well, he had long since determined on within his secret heart. It seemed as if he did not choose himself to stir at all in that which had been mooted by the common soldiery in the first instance, and advanced by insubordination verging on open mutiny. Or perhaps seeing that, without his personal co-operation in the matter, all things were tending to the result which he believed the best, he was content to lend them the mere negative support afforded by

his presence at deliberations which he did not oppose or hinder; wisely reserving his great energies for the accomplishment of those great ends which could not be wrought to maturity without them; and holding himself, like the gods of the Grecian drama, aloof from matters which afforded no due scope for his unconquerable powers, from plots which could as well be disentangled and wound smoothly out by those who had, perhaps, imbibed his own opinions, and were unconsciously, while fancying themselves

CHAPTER V.

Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Cæsar,
And in the spirit of man there is no blood:
Oh! that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit,
And not dismember Cæsar! But, alas!
Cæsar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully.
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcase fit for hounds.

Julius Cæsar.

THE indignation of the parliament, who after retreat of the eleven impeached members l more and more come into the strong meaes of the army, was fearfully inflamed by the

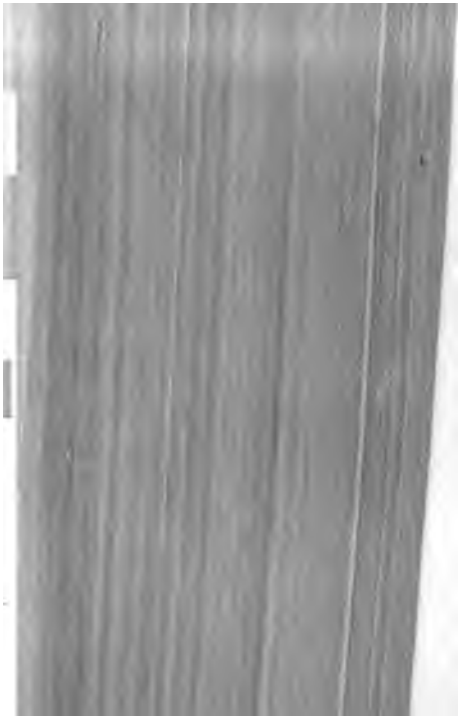
King's absolute refusal of the Four Acts; so much so, that a bill was passed forbidding all addresses for the future to Charles Stuart, and all renewal of negotiations with him for a settlement, though not till after two or three debates in which the military leaders, and above all the lieutenant-general, took active part. The last, indeed, on one occasion, ended a long and strenuous harangue by raising his voice to its highest pitch with these emphatic words: —

insubordination had subsided, not a day passed without some riotous commotion indicative of the divided state of public feeling. Continual tumults between the London mob, now become once more loyal to the King, and the detachments of the veterans quartered in the metropolis, were not suppressed without some bloodshed; and in the early spring were followed by a general movement of the royalists throughout the kingdom, which, had it been planned with as much of concert and of wisdom as it was executed with high bravery and spirit, would have caused much perplexity to those in power. As it was, however, so ill-timed and unpremeditated were the risings of the cavaliers, that they were easily subdued in detail, although their numbers if united would have been truly formidable, and although they fought as individual bodies with all the resolution of despair, and in no case were vanquished without loss and difficulty to the independent army. The men of Kent were beaten, after a hard fought and well-

cannonade the royalist troops from the castle; and to agree with Oliver, at a convention held in my Lady Home's house in the Canongate, that there was a necessity, now fully obvious, for taking the King's life.

Meanwhile Lord Goring, who had advanced to Blackheath, hoping that by his presence London would be encouraged into action, being checked by Fairfax, shut himself up in Colchester; but after a long and vigorous defence was forced, when all was over, to surrender at discretion; and had the further misery of seeing two of his bravest officers, Sir George Lisle and Sir Charles Lucas, shot by the conquerors as rebels:—a rigorous and cruel exercise of power for which the general did not escape much obloquy, although it was alleged in his defence, and probably with truth, that he was instigated to such unwonted harshness solely by the suggestions of the fierce and unrelenting Ireton.

This absolute suppression of the King's friends by land was poorly compensated by the defection



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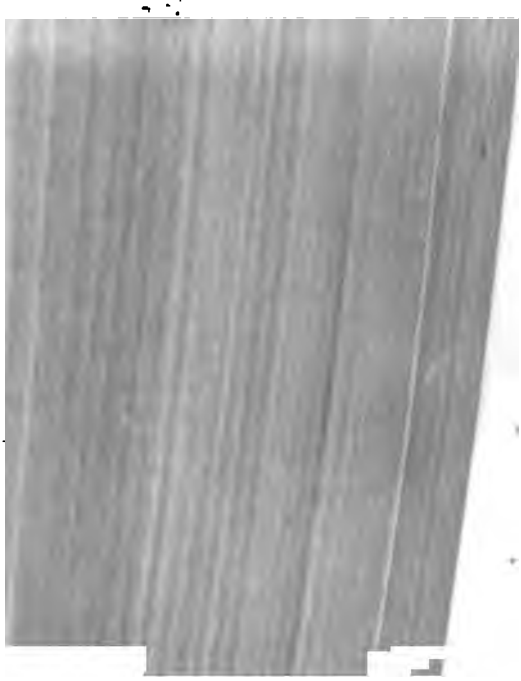
frivolous and useless enterprises up the Thames and on the coasts, until the parliament had fitted out another fleet under the Earl of Warwick! when, after what a seaman would term lubberly manœuvring he sailed toward Holland, closely pursued by Warwick's navy, and never performed any action serviceable to his unhappy father's cause, or creditable to his own fame.

During the progress of the futile struggle, which had terminated in rendering obvious to all the hopelessness of any effort at armed interposition for the King, the parliament, while Cromwell was in Scotland, had held fresh negotiations at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, with Charles, who to the last, despite the urgent prayers both of his friends and the more moderate of his opponents, refused compliance with the conditions offered, though he must now have apprehended this to be the only means by which he could retain possession of his crown.

The temper of the Commons, after receiving tidings of the King's unconquered obstinacy,

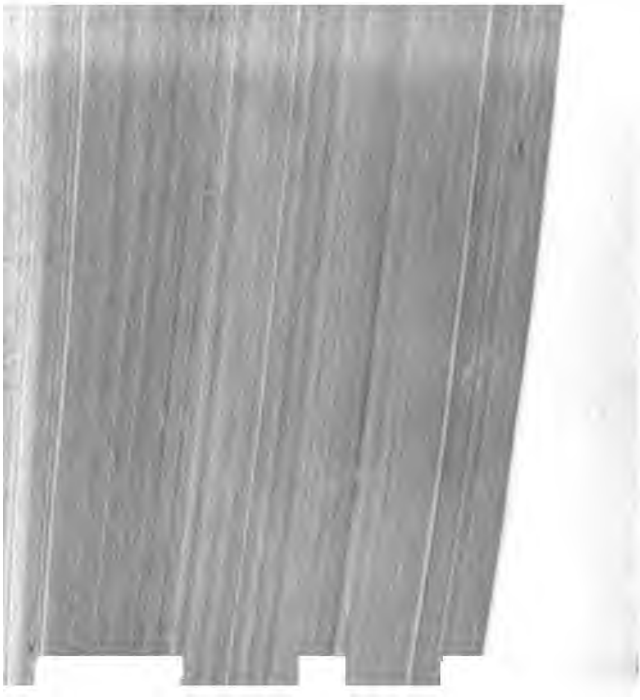
and the army faction, that "the King's answer was a ground for the Houses to proceed for the settlement of the peace of the kingdom:"—a resolution which, had it been carried into force, would have effectually undone all that had been accomplished by the long and bloody strife which had preceded it, and left the King as powerful for good or evil as he had been at its commencement, provided he should, as his true policy would dictate, hold to the friendship of the parliament.

That afternoon a large committee of the Commons waited upon the general at his lodgings of Whitehall, but met from him only a supercilious and cold welcome, and no satisfaction. The following morning when the members went to take their seats, a guard of musketeers was at the door headed by Colonel Pride and the Lord Grey of Groby, who held a list of those who should not be permitted to go in to the debate; and these were held three days in custody in different inns of court, while the remain-



swer was unsatisfactory, he refused peremptorily to give any vote on the occasion. Then, after several vain attempts to find out the devisers of the violence, Fairfax denying any knowledge of it, and the guards merely stating that they had their orders, he at the first resolved to vacate his seat once again; but after much reflection he held it the manlier and more upright course still to continue in the House, opposing to the best of his abilities all inroads on the liberties of Englishmen in their most delicate and dearest point, the privilege of parliament.

Just at this juncture,—indeed upon the very evening of the day which had been signalized by the exclusion of the presbyterian members—Cromwell returned from Scotland and took up his abode in the King's palace at Whitehall. To him indeed Ardenne's suspicions had first pointed as the real mover of this outrageous measure; yet on his charging it directly to him, he answered with so much of ready frankness, that "he had not been acquainted with the design, yet



speech, and not without a species of wild eloquence, against all forms of monarchy, which he asserted neither to be "good in itself, nor yet good for the people;" quoting the whole eighth chapter of the book of Samuel, and arguing therefrom "that to be governed by a king was in itself displeasing to the King and Monarch of the universe, and absolutely sinful—for that the Lord himself bade Samuel yet solemnly protest unto them, and show the manner of the king that should reign over them, and afterward that he foretold to them 'that ye shall cry out in that day because of the king ye have chosen you, and the Lord shall not hear you in that day.' Wherefore," he added, "let us put away from us this sin and this abomination—let us wash from our hands the stain of this iniquity—yea! let us cleanse ourselves with myrrh, with aloes, and with hyssop, ay, and with blood—even the blood of sacrifices!—from this offence which stinketh in the nostrils of Jehovah! and let this man—the firebrand of civil conflagration—the drawer of the slaughtering sword

against his people—the slayer of our brethren and our sons—the spoiler of our vineyards and our oliveyards—this faithless gentleman and perjured prince—this tyrant, traitor, murderer, Charles Stuart—let him be driven out even as the scape-goat sent into the wilderness to bear away the sins and sufferings of the people—let him be cut off utterly, and cast upon the dung-hill, and let the dogs lick *his* blood, as they licked that of Ahab, when the Lord smote by the arrow

or restraint of conscience should now be found to fetter one, whom neither his own coronation oath, nor the laws which he had sworn to honour, uphold, and obey, could hinder from endeavouring to subvert his country's constitution and build an autocratic throne upon the ruin of his people's freedom.

When these had finished speaking Sir Edgar Ardenne calmly but impressively addressed them, beseeching them to ponder deeply and pause long ere they should take a step irrecoverable, and if it should prove evil, irretrievable and ruinous. Admitting, as fully as the warmest advocates for the King's death, his guilt in aiming at supreme unconstitutional dominion—his guilt in plunging the whole population intrusted to his care—even as children to a father's charge—into the misery of civil slaughter, merely to gratify his own ambition—his guilt in violating every covenant and compact he had made;—owning the utter hopelessness of any effort to re-establishpeace while he should be within the realm, in how close custody

'to spare the subject, and subdue the proud!' To slay Charles Stuart, is but to elevate a bad king to an honoured martyr!—to depose and banish him, is to degrade him from a suffering prince into a scorned and abject beggar!—Men will compassionate, and honour, ay! and bleed for royalty in chains, when they but jeer and scoff at royalty in tatters! Banish this man, and he may wander forth from court to court of Europe; he may be treated with mock deference, may be styled king and brother, and pensioned with the crumbs that fall from royal tables. But 'twill be hollow all and insincere! Scorned and despised he will drag out a life, held by your sufferance, weary and painful to himself, and innocent to you even of momentary cause for apprehension! Slay him, and ye will buckle harness on the back of each legitimate hereditary prince of Christendom against you!—ye will concentrate and renerve the partisans of royalty now scattered, hopeless, and undone!—ye will enkindle a consuming flame, which, though for a brief space it

poison or the dagger, so to avoid the scandal and the odium of his public execution—to whom the honest but fanatical and visionary Harrison replied in words of fire, repudiating the idea of such foul and midnight murder, and declaring that, as their cause was just, so should their vengeance be both bold and open!—that as his crimes were evident, so should their punishment be manifest and in the face of day!

"What!" he exclaimed with real eloquence, "shall we, the workers of the grandest revolution earth ever has beheld—the conscience-armed deliverers of England — the champions of a nation's freedom—the Christian warriors of an all-seeing God — shall we take off our foe by ratsbane in the dark, or slay him with a hireling knife, for a mean paltry dread of what the world shall say?—Not so! not so; but we will point the world's voice by our actions, fetter its opinion by our boldness! Let Charles—I say—let Charles THE KING be brought to trial in the presence of his peers—THE PEOPLE! There

if he be found guilty, let him be led to execution in the world's eye and the sun's! Let him be slain as a deliberate and solemn sacrifice—offered as a high victim at the shrines of freedom and of God! with honour and respect to the great station he has held, but with implacable and stern resentment toward the crimes by which he has defiled it. As he hath done to others so let us do to him, not as vile stabbers and assassins, but as elected judges, acting for men below, and answerable to the Lord on high! Let *him*

attention which the subject merited to the opinions of the speakers. Much of the time he was engaged in whispering, and even jesting, with those who sat beside him, and once or twice indulged in those rude ebullitions of practical humour which had made him such a favourite in the camp, but which were most unsuitable and unbecoming in a grave and sorrowful debate, involving, it might be, the life and death of thousands, the fate of a most ancient line of kings, the future government of a great and glorious empire. Not a little astonished and disgusted at this conduct, Sir Edgar watched him closely to detect, if possible, the causes of his mood and the internal workings of his mind. But after a long survey, being still in doubt whether he had brought to the council a mind predetermined and unalterably fixed, or whether he had put on levity of manner to conceal irresolution and a perturbed spirit, he called openly on Cromwell to give his opinion.

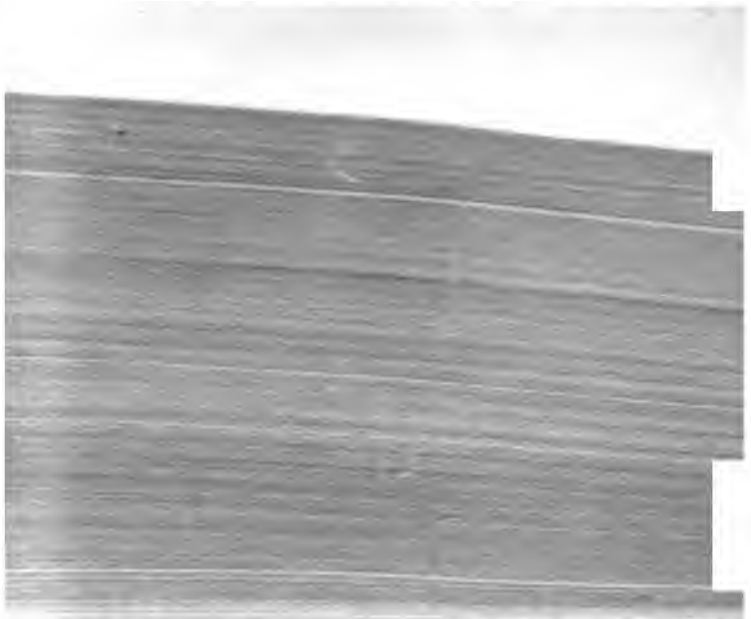
"Verily," answered he, "verily I am yet un-

resolved. Have at thee, Ludlow!" he continued springing to his feet with a loud boisterous laugh, and hurling at the head of the republican a cushion of the sofa, on which he was sitting, with such violence as almost to overturn him, upsetting at the same time several candles, and throwing the whole council into confusion, under cover of which he ran out of the room, and was already halfway down the stairs, when Ludlow, who had pursued him, struck him between the

About the same time some idle intercessions at the request of the prince were made in the behalf of Charles by the States-general of Holland, and a letter yet more idle sent by the queen to be delivered to the parliament.

In a short time the charge of the committee was prepared, and approved by the Commons. The House of Lords, indeed, rejected it; and instantly adjourning for a week, on their return found their doors locked by orders of the Lower House, and being thus excluded sat no more for many years.

Then a high court of justice was appointed of the most celebrated and influential men, civil and military of the realm. Bradshaw, a lawyer of great talent and inflexible boldness, was named Lord President, invested with much state and having lodgings suitable to his high office assigned to him at Westminster. The royal prisoner was brought up from Hurst to Windsor under a powerful guard of Harrison's command, and thence to his own palace at St. James's



CHAPTER VI.

Mal. If such a one be fit to govern, speak ;

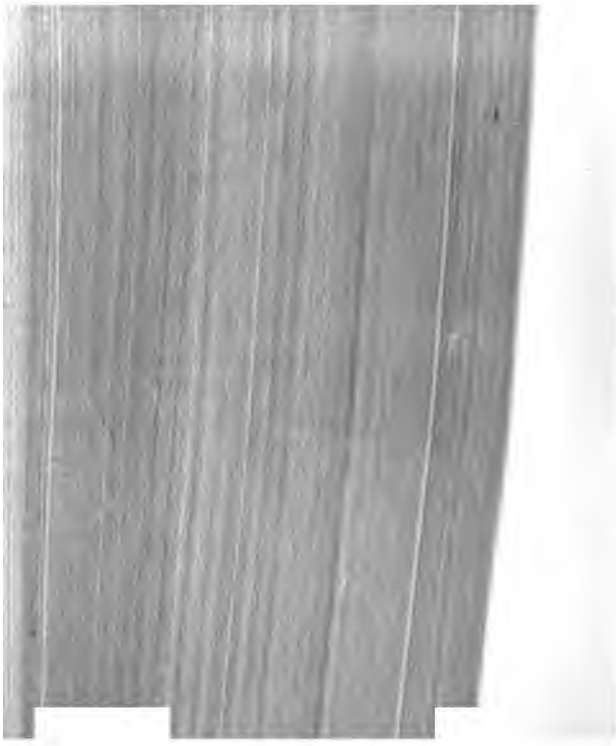
* * * * *

Mac. Fit to govern!
No not to live.—O nation miserable!

Macbeth.

THE day at length arrived, big with the fate of England and her King—the 20th of January, memorable thenceforth through every age for the most solemn and sublimely daring measure recorded in the annals of the world.

At an extremely early hour the members of the high court of justice, which had been constituted with the utmost labour by the military council that swayed the helm of state, so as to be



Sir Robert Cotton's stairs, on this announcement Cromwell, who had been previously conversing with sundry of his intimates among the judges, with the same air of jocularity which had so strongly marked his conduct during the earlier consultation, rose suddenly from the place where he had been sitting and moved with rapid but equal steps towards the window. The keen eye of Sir Edgar followed him, and to his no small wonder he perceived that the hands, which the daring chieftain laid upon the wainscot to support him as he leaned his body forward to look upon the royal captive, quivered so violently as almost to communicate a tremour to his frame. And when he turned away after a long and anxious gaze upon the destined victim, although his eye was steady and unblenching, and his mouth firmly compressed and calm, his whole face, usually so rubicund and sanguine in its colouring, was ghastly pale, and his lips white as ashes.

Marvelling greatly at this change in one so stern and inaccessible to ordinary feelings; re-

Say and Lisle, with a long table
rly decked before them. The galleries were
wded almost to suffocation by spectators pale
ith excitement and anxiety, while the whole body of the building was filled by an enormous multitude upon the right, and by a regiment of musketeers upon the left, in caps of steel and polished corslets, with their pieces loaded and their ready matches lighted, a narrow passage being marked out with silken cords between the soldiers and populace, affording a free passage from the doorway to the bar.

The judges entered in the midst of a silence so stern and deep that the slight rustling of their mantles and their feet on the thick carpets, which were strewn within the bar, was clearly audible. Solemn, severe, and sad they took their seats — each man of them, as it appeared, almost oppressed by the intense feeling of the vast responsibility which had been laid upon him, and each determined to acquit himself as became one called

of each man in that huge apartment had ceased from its pulsations:—not a hand moved, not a breath was drawn. It was, however, but for a moment; for the King instantly came forth, dressed in his usual garb of sable silk, decked only by the star and garter, and wearing on his head his high-crowned hat, which he did not remove.

After a stern and haughty look of mingled pride and sadness on the assembled court, he calmly took the seat prepared for his reception. Nor did he then by any glance or sign of courtesy acknowledge, or show any reverence to the court; but after sitting still for a few minutes' space, arose again and, having turned completely round with his back toward the judges, gazed steadfastly down the long area of the hall, with the same severe aspect as before, until the crier of the court began to read the ordinance of parliament commanding his arraignment, in a sharp ringing voice, that filled the whole apartment with its distinct and high-pitched tones. Then he again sat down

missioners proceeded until nearly eighty had answered to their names.

Then with an air of deep religious feeling, mixed with the consciousness of high authority, engraved on his strong features marked as they were by lines of wearing thought and pale from studious vigils over the midnight lamp, Bradshaw arose; and his voice, though it faltered not, was subdued almost unto tenderness, as he addressed the royal culprit.

"Charles Stuart, King of England—the Commons of England, being deeply sensible of the calamities that have been brought upon this nation, which are fixed upon you as the principal author of them, have resolved to make inquisition for blood; and, according to that debt and duty which they owe to justice—to God—to the kingdom and themselves, they have resolved to bring you to trial and to judgment; and for that purpose have constituted the high court of justice, before which you are brought."

the bar, but to get on to his duty—and the indictment was read instantly, containing in effect, "that he had been admitted King of England, and trusted with a limited power to govern according to law; and by his oath and office was obliged to use the power committed to him for the good and benefit of the people; but that he had, out of a wicked design to erect himself an unlimited and tyrannical power, and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people, traitorously levied war against the present parliament, and the people therein represented." It then enumerated the calamities which had befallen England—the free and noble blood which had been shed like water—the devastation of the fair face of the land, the burning of its rich and thriving cities, the slaughter of its bravest sons;—it pointed to the causes—the commissions signed by his own hand for levying this domestic war—the raising of his standard in the town of Nottingham—his presence at Edgehill and other battles fought in his presence and at his instigation: so many flagrant proofs that

distance. One officer, a grim hard-featured fanatic, leaped forward from the ranks, and pointing with his sheathed rapier to that division of the galleries whence the disturbance had proceeded, furiously shouted to his men, bidding them level their muskets and give fire.

A fearful scene ensued—the heavy rattling of the matchlocks, as they were thrown forward ready for instant use by the fierce soldiery, was almost drowned by the cries, shrieks, and exclamations of the spectators, many of whom were females, all now in mortal terror at the prospect of receiving an immediate volley, rushing in all directions to and fro, and some of them endeavouring to drop down into the body of the hall.

Before, however, time was given for the men to fire, it was announced to the lord-president that the disturber of the court was in truth no other or less personage than the Lady Fairfax, who had taken this extraordinary mode of testifying her dislike to the proceedings, and had now been persuaded to withdraw.

On this announcement, silence and peace was once again restored, and after a few moments the clerk went on with the arraignment, repeating the offensive words more loudly than before—"On the behalf, and in the name of all the good people of England, as a tyrant, traitor, and murderer—and an implacable enemy to the commonwealth of England."

Then, with remarkable and singular ill-taste and as ill-judgment, Charles, who had been con-

open undisguised contempt of Charles—and with strong emphasis, and evident determination to check this disrespectful levity on the King's part, though not without consideration for the high place and natural displeasure of the prisoner at the proceedings of the court, rebuked him for the tone and air he had adopted—a tone and air becoming neither his own dignity, his position at the present moment, nor the exalted duties and great power of the court before which he stood thus arraigned.

With the same air of unconcealed contempt which he had hitherto displayed, Charles listened to the president's address, and answered by a denial of the existence of any authority whatever in the court—of any right pertaining unto them or to the English people to hold their King to trial—or of any legal power at all vested in those before whom he now stood.

Little occurred worthy of further note, during the three days of this singular and all-important ceremonial. The King, persisting in denial of the

upon him an immediate judgment. But Charles again refused to offer any answer or defence, crying out that he "valued not the charge a rush"—that he "would not now violate the trust his people had reposed in him by owning a new court of judicature,"—that "it was for their liberty he stood, and but for this he would not here object to giving satisfaction to the English people of the clearness of his past proceedings."

The clerk was now ordered to record the prisoner's default; and the court once again adjourned until the twenty-seventh, sitting, throughout the interval caused by the King's determination, in the painted chamber daily, and hearing witnesses to the fact of his setting up the standard of his cause at Nottingham—the leading of his troops in armour at Edgehill, Newbury, and Naseby—the issuing mandates and commissions to his officers for prosecution of the war; and seeking to establish proofs with which they judged it needful to hold themselves pro-

vided, in case of the King's choosing at the last to plead.

After this pause, they met as previously stated, upon the twenty-seventh, in the great Hall at Westminster, and the cause was once more resumed; but still the King refused to answer or submit; and then the president informed him that the court had considered, and agreed upon a judgment; but yet—if he had any thing to say in defence of himself in respect to the matter charged—they

contempt and contumacy, and that they were resolved unanimously to proceed to judgment and to punishment.

Then in a long speech, eloquent, and lucid; and replete with arguments, such as appeared most fitting to excuse and justify such a proceeding, and to convince the world of the right *moral* justice of a measure, not certainly in strict conformity with *legal* precedents, Bradshaw proceeded to pass sentence on the prisoner—and toward the end of his oration urged on the King the scriptural example of David's late repentance for his imitation.

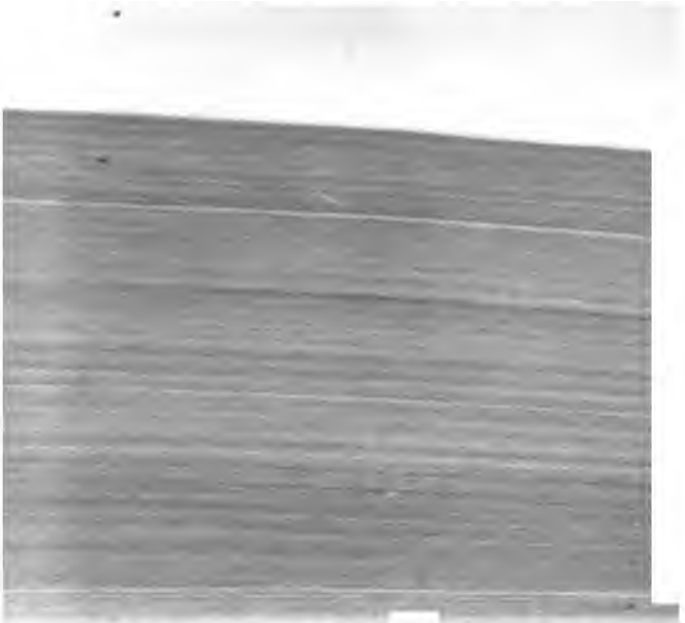
Unmoved and haughty, with his dark features marked by no expression, save a slight scornful sneer, Charles rose, still covered, and strove once again to interrupt him—demanding to be heard concerning those great imputations, thus laid to his charge; but he was again reminded that he had refused to own the court, and that too much delay and liberty had been already granted to him.

The sentence was then read—the president affirming it to be "the sentence, judgment, and resolution of the whole court," and all the members standing up to testify their full concurrence with their speaker.

For the last time, the royal culprit claimed to be heard; but at the president's direction the guards withdrew him, still exclaiming loudly—"that, since he was not suffered for to speak, he might expect what sort of justice other men

The court arose—the members dispersed to their homes—the most unprecedented, singular, and solemn trial on record in the annals of the universe was ended—a trial, wherein a puissant nation was the plaintiff—a king, the son and grandson of a long line of mighty and hereditary monarchs, the defendant—and the point at issue, the momentous question, whether the kings of England should be despots over cringing and soul-shackled slaves, or the first magistrates of an enlightened and wise, a free and potent people!

What were the real motives of that man, who, if he did not absolutely bring about, might beyond question absolutely have prevented, the execution of the King—no human understanding may divine. But the great probability is, that, like most human motives, they were of a mingled character.—Sir Edgar Ardenne, in the course of the proceedings, had been convinced to his full satisfaction that the mind of Oliver was strangely and unnaturally overwrought. His coarse and vulgar jocularity at Ludlow's house—his pale-



pelled the soldiers and domestics to admit him.

The fortunate commander was already in possession of the superb apartments which had so lately called his fallen rival master. In the first antechamber of that gorgeous suite, two privates of the ironsides were sitting by a blazing fire, its bright light flashing from their steel armour and accoutrements in strong and painful contrast to the luxurious decorations and appliances of royal ease among which they were seated. The second and the third rooms of the suite were vacant, although dazzlingly illuminated by many waxen lights.

Long ere he reached the door of the last room, Ardenne's attention was aroused by the deep groans, mingled with broken exclamations, snatches of fervent but disjointed prayer, and bursts of passionate and painful weeping, which fell upon his ear as he advanced. He rapped against the panel, but his signal was unheard, or, at the least, unheeded;—a second—a third

they fell on the soft textu
Persian carpets.

Scrupulous though he wa
to excess of undue familiarit
much excited now to stand
He turned the gilded handl
lessly the door revolved up
one of his most dark mood
conscience-stricken, that w
before him. The large ap
decked with furniture and
crimson velvet—the toilet-t
tenances of transparent crys
gold—the royal arms of Eng
the tester of the bed, piled h

tenanted the halls of England's sovereign. A single light, and that obscure and waning, stood on the central table of some rich eastern wood, and on the hearth a few decaying brands, which had been suffered to burn low, smouldered with more of smoke than flame, casting a sickly and unnatural light about the chamber.

But HE—the tenant—with blood-shot eyes, and features ghastly wan and haggard—he strode to and fro with steps irregular and almost staggering—now waving his extended arm on high —now striking it upon his broad breast with a violence denoted plainly by the heavy and dull sounds of the oft-repeated blows. Tears—copious and agonizing tears—those which console not nor relieve, but burn like vengeful fires — flowed down his hollow cheeks—and his words, wild as his gait and gestures, were now of bitter self-reproach, of accusation, and remorse — now of sincere and humble penitence —and now of fierce ecstatic triumph! — But in an instant, in the twinkling of the eye, as he perceived that he was

not alone, his air and aspect were, as if by magic transformation, utterly changed and new.

"Ha! good Sir Edgar," he exclaimed, "this is a pleasure, such as I have not long experienced — nor, though such friendly visitations were once ordinary things between us, of late days expected!"

"I have called on you now, lieutenant-general," Ardenne gravely replied, "not on mere ordinary reasons whether of friendship or of ceremonial — but upon matters of great weight

satisfied! The great example is set forth to England, and the universe!—all ends are answered, that his execution can attain! And you, sir, who have won the brightest crown of warlike honour, that has been witnessed in these later days, beware! Beware, I say, lest present times, ay! and posterity to boot, shall deem that in permitting Charles to perish by the headsman's act you have looked rather to your own, than to your country's interests! Kill him—(for in neglecting to preserve, you actually kill no less than if alone, and by a single mandate, you condemned him)—kill him, and it may well be you shall reign yourself as monarch over England.—But to gain a precarious, short-lived, and unhappy eminence, you shall lose present peace, and future glory—you shall cast from you the esteem and love of those who *have* bled, and *would* die, for you—you shall stand high in solitary friendless state—without the lingering consolation of a self-approving spirit! Spare him—preserve him—and you shall be the first

clemency that earth has wi
face bore the steps of giants
"Nay! you wax warm i
answered coldly. "Surel
you up! yea! the desire of
up to your brain, and clo
I would—ay of a surety I
would lay down not merely
that vainest and most fick
fantasy—which you ascribe
not due, but to the Lord of
even!—my existence upon
seeing England the freest a
ropean princedoms!—that
bending reed might not be tr
this frail and half-cracked pot

not borne in on our hearts—branded with characters of living fire upon the inmost tablets of our souls—'ye shall avenge my people—for their blood, and their children's blood, which he hath spilled upon the ground that hath not drunk it up, calleth aloud for vengeance!—Yea! ye shall slay the King.' So is it not written that 'ye shall not suffer one of them to live!'—And what are we that we should contradict Jehovah? I could not if I would—and I say not that I would. As the game stands, I could not now save Charles Stuart from the infliction of that righteous sentence, which you have aided to pass on him!—The people have risen in their might—the people's voice has gone forth to the uttermost portions of the world—'The King shall surely die!'—The people's voice is God's voice! Hear it and tremble—hear it and obey!"

At once the latest hope of Edgar vanished—the firm determination, evinced not by words only, but by the cold hard eye, the compressed

life at Cromwell's intercess
of Cromwell only could
that should prevail over th
morose fanaticism of the a

Seeing the fruitlessness
desisted. With a sick h
he departed from the pr
whom, even now he knew
an over-zealous patriot, or
tical adventurer, playing
mighty venture; and str
lone lodging a sleeples
ominous and sad presaging
rows, by remorse; for he alr
to repent the part which he
revolution now about to te

for the ruler—so disastrously, as his fears told him, for the ruled—and above all, so fatally for England's permanent and real peace.

Scarcely had Edgar gone from Cromwell's presence, before a new petitioner arrived, and, with yet more of difficulty than the former had experienced, gained access to the presence of his kinsman; for that petitioner was no other than his cousin, Colonel John Cromwell, an officer of the Dutch service, and commissioned as his agent with the parliament by the Prince of Wales, who at this time resided at the Hague.

In the commencement of the interview the able and accomplished soldier confined himself to solemn and ceremonious remonstrances against the act in contemplation; assuring his great relative of the resentment, horror, and disgust which this atrocious crime—for so he hesitated not to call it—would kindle throughout every Christian land!—would kindle not against England, nor the parliament, nor army—but against him alone, who, as the world well knew, could wind

sovereign and solemn j
you say, I have no pow
army, and not I, who w
the King, brooking not a

"Remember you no
other, "how some twelv
profess to me, that, rath
sword in the defence of C
republicans to harm one
Have you forgotten this,
rations—or do you wilfull
violate your word?"

"Well—right well—I
well replied in tones of
well you do, now to remem
you mind me of *his* base

bitterness of wrath as not even I could stem, either by force or council! — The times are changed, and strangely! since so I spake to you —and on his own head be his blood!—for by his own craft, his own ingrate and selfish subtlety, hath he dragged down on him this ruin. If it be true that whom the gods have destined to destruction they first deprive of reason, as the wise Ethnics did believe, then hath the Lord of Hosts hardened the heart of this man, that he should die, not live!"

"You are determined then to do this deed of infamy and horror?" the foreign officer demanded.

"I am determined," Oliver answered sternly, "not to interfere with England's course of judgment. I have prayed for the King—and fasted! —yea! I have striven with the Lord, these many times, that some way might be given me to save him—but no return hath yet been made to me, nor any sign, nor answer!"

Then Colonel Cromwell rose up from his seat,

the key with a wary han
strong night-latch, he retu
from his bosom an emblazo
taining his credentials and
lum perfectly blank and va
length and sealed, in his ow
royal father, by Charles Stu
and heir apparent, he laid
under the eyes of his bold k

"Cousin," he said, "it is
now with mere words in this
at this *carte blanche*. It is
now to make — not yoursel
posterity and family and ki
great and honourable, throug
as they changed their name

and the whole generation of them, that no after ages will be able to wipe out the shameful stain!"

The general's features worked convulsively, and his face flushed crimson, and paled, and flushed again, as he heard this address; and his hand drooped down to his dagger's hilt, and griped it with such force, as if he would have buried his strong fingers in the ivory pommel; but when his guest had ended, he answered in a quiet voice, though evidently guarded and constrained.

"You have done, sir!" he said, "and I have heard you out!—I have been hitherto calm!—very calm," he continued, gradually warming, as he spoke, into fierce ire; "I have endured to hear my motives questioned — my assertions doubted—and the great cause, of which I am a most unworthy, but a most sincere, supporter —scoffed at, and vilified, and held up as atrocious in the world's eye, infamous, and shameful! Calmly I have endured all this!—nay I

to *bribe* me! presumed t
buy me, not like a fetter
—but, like a renegado
chainless mind. How!
have ventured, face to fac
of affronts—to proffer to
and titles—to turn me fr
pose—to seduce me fro
allegiance, and my hono
say—thank God, if you
am regenerate, and you
I one jot more a sinner th
tittle less connected with
I sheathed this dagger"—
drew and dashed the weapo
ground before his feet—"d

Truly had Oliver said that the tempter was of his own blood—for he rose firmly from his chair, and with an erect and unflinching carriage looked full in his enraged kinsman's eye, till he ceased speaking; and then—

"Tush! cousin Oliver," he said; "I care not for your vagaries of passion. I am a soldier, man, and not a woman, or a child, that words can daunt me. But now you are distempered—think of this matter deeply, weigh it, and ponder on it, ere you answer. I shall wait, at my inn, your reply until to-morrow morning. Give you good night and better temper!"

And he withdrew, believing in his heart that Oliver's rage was but assumed, and that the golden bait would take. But sadly was he destined to be undeceived;—for at about an hour after midnight a messenger came to him, from Whitehall, and told him he might now go to bed, for he must not expect any more answer than he had, unto the prince;—for that the council of the officers had again been seeking

CHAPTER VII.

——Now, there he lies,
With none so poor to do him reverence.

Julius Cæsar.

Tot populis terrisque superbum
Regnatorem Asiæ. Tacet ingens litore truncus
Avolsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus.

Æneid ii. 556.

MIDNIGHT was on the mighty city. The happy sleep had swept away the cares of thousands in its still, deathlike oblivion. The multitudes, who had assembled to sate themselves

day of horror, had passed
trast in the repose of their
The very guards were slum
about the precincts of W
sound or breath disturbed
night. Within the palace,
lime apartments which he
while living, upon a lofty
crimson curtains, and rich
the gold-blazoned arms of E
oaken coffin, half-covered wi
velvet. Many tall waxen tor
the room in candlesticks of s
at least in height, and their li
a narrow plate of silver deckir
whereon were these few words

that knows no earthly waking. No coronetted peers watched over the embalmed remains—no flippant pages hushed their accustomed merriment in reverence to the ashes of their master—no guard of honour with trailed arms, and downcast visages, stood sentinel without the door. But with their carbines loaded, sheathed in their buff coats and bright armour, two privates of the ironsides strode to and fro, passing each other and repassing at brief intervals—the ringing of their heavy armature, and the loud sounds of their spurred and booted footfalls, awakening strange echoes in that apartment of the dead.

The night wore onward, and the stars began to wink in the cold skies, and the first coming of the morn was felt in the increasing chilness of the air—hitherto had the watch of those unusual mourners been lonely and uninterrupted. The clock, however, was just striking three, and its loud cadences were vocal still through the long vacant halls and vast saloons of the deserted palace, when a remote and stealthy footstep

aside. His face was very pale, but perfectly composed and grave, with the mouth firmly closed, and the eyes shining with a steady and unaltered light.

"Good watch," he cried, as he came in,—"you keep good watch. Cold work, I trow, and cheerless. What would ye say now to a flagon of october—hey Stephenson, hey Bowtell?—So! so!—ye are on duty, ye would say—well interrupt me not for that—I will relieve ye for a brief space—but one at a time—one only! Stephenson, give me thy carbine, and the match—and now get thee down to the buttery. Tarry not over half-an-hour, and return straightway to take bluff Bowtell's place!"

The soldier grinned significantly, gave up his weapon to his officer and walked off, greatly pleased at this brief intermission of an unpleasant duty. Cromwell looked after him as he departed, and when his footsteps had sunk into silence, depositing the carbine he had taken in

speaking thoughtfully and
though wishing to conceal
assumption of unfeeling mer
not waked to scare ye?"

"Now may the Lord for
superstitious soldier, half-al
and manner of his officer—
worthy general?"

"Why, how now, simpl
replied, "you look in truth,
forth in his untimely cereme
But fear not, Bowtell, fea
sleeps sound!—and shall
when the great trumpet of
him to a mightier judgmer
be to a darker doom!—

look upon him:"—and he moved closer to the bed, and throwing back the pall of velvet tried to raise the lid;—but though not permanently fastened down it yet resisted the attempt, being held tightly by some two or three stout spikes. After a moment's pause he thrust the ferril of his staff into the chink, and made an effort thus to draw the nails out of their sockets; but they had been driven in too firmly, and the staff creaked as though it would have broken.

"Lend me thy rapier," he exclaimed; "its steel hilt will have strength enough;" and, with the word, he forced the pommel into the aperture between the lid and side, and, leaning heavily upon the weapon as a lever, wrenched up the cover with such a sudden impetus that the nails flew up into the air, and struck against the canopy which overhung it. Then he stood fixed, and for a short time speechless, regarding with a disturbed and cloudy brow the mangled body of his victim.

The body, which had been opened and em-

ment of all the muscles
plainly as while he was in l
tially covered by an embroi
about the brows, and a bro
silk fastened beneath the ch
place, but a small interval,
discoloured streak of dingy
severment. The face was
more so than its wont, and
hues than that of the unda
leaned over it. The lips r
and healthful colour, with so
still visible about them—the
but naturally and as if in sle
served its wonted form, unsh
the iron-hand of death. The

characteristic of the living man—of a placidity and peace more deep than usual; but nothing which could have led any one to fancy that the thread of life had been snapped violently by the rude weapon of the executioner, for him who slumbered there so tranquilly.

For a long time Cromwell spoke not a word, nor moved a limb, nor even winked an eyelid, steadfastly, gazing on the features of his fallen foe and rival.

"He sleeps—indeed! how peacefully and well! That eye shall flash no more with kingly pride, that lip be wreathed no more into the calm but haughty sneer! The busy brain that plotted so much woe to England—the indomitable mind, that would not swerve one hair-breadth from its purpose; no, not to purchase life—are these—are these too, in repose, like that cold, voiceless lip, that nerveless and inanimate right hand? Is that sleep dreamless? Doth the soul, plunged in a dark and senseless torpor, lie paralyzed and shorn of its pervading

art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee! How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer! son of the morning! how art thou cut down, which didst weaken the nations!' Thus was it written of a mightier one than thou—thus hath it been with thee! Thy place is empty upon earth, thy country no more knows thee! Verily thou art fallen asleep —asleep for many a thousand year—until thou shalt be summoned to make answer in the spirit, for all thy deeds wrought in the flesh. Yet then, even then, wilt thou, fallen great one, have nothing to witness against me. But for thine own self-will—thine own tyrannical and senseless folly—thine own oppression of the saints, and trampling under foot the delicate and tender consciences of men: nay, more than all this, but for thine own false dealing and foul treachery toward those who would have served thee truly thou mightest have still sat in the high place of

slaved and pa
been served by
Lord's help, in
hearts loyal, si
mightest have
dying in green
lamentations of
thy sons that
sceptre, which
by thy race?
looked on thee
would have pres
seeming fortune
which mine ow
throned upon th
followers throug
the battle

Surely, but for thine own insane and selfish folly, thou wast formed to die old! Lo!" And, as thus he spoke, he laid the finger of his right hand in the gaping wound, and with cool scrutiny, examined the consistency and texture of the muscles. "Lo! how sound is this flesh, how wiry and elastic these dissevered sinews. There is no symptom here of disease or debility! no decay—no corruption! But for the axe, he had lived years—ay, many and long years! But verily all things are of the Lord—and had HE not predestined him to die, then had he hardened not his heart—nor raised up foes against him, of whom it is a scripture, that, 'none shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.' Whom the Lord listeth to destroy, surely he striveth but in vain, for who shall find strength in the sword, or refuge in the speed of horses, against the Lord of Hosts? Then say not that I slew thee, but the Lord—

had judged to at

He paused fr
which he had po
his spirit, half c
convicted of crim
convince himself
dark creed he ha
his restless spiri
ception.

The sentinel,
him, with his han
first extended it
gazing partly in a
awe, now on the c
the dead king, no
features of his almo
astonished at the
expected

on all occasions anywise uncommon or surprising.

For several minutes' space Oliver gazed again in silence on the body, and then replacing the lid, gently, and almost tenderly, "Farewell," he said, "farewell on earth for ever! strangely have we been linked together here below, and wonderfully do we part! Hadst thou prevailed, my fate had been more bitter! Farewell, farewell! we meet no more, whether for good or evil, until that final meeting, when God must judge between us two. Till then sleep soundly —and then awake—He only knows—to what!"

He then replaced the screws, and threw the pall across the coffin as before, the soldier Bowtell, holding a torch, which he had taken from the nearest candelabrum, to assist him. This finished, he withdrew a pace or two, wrapped his cloak closely round him, and sat down upon a settle near the bed. The soldier, having replaced the light, stood for a little time in silence, and then said,

CHAPTER VIII.

To hold you in perpetual amity,
To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts
With an unslipping knot, take Anthony
Octavia to his wife. * *

* * * By this marriage,
All little jealousies, which now seem great,
And all great fears, which now import their dangers,
Would then be nothing.

Antony and Cleopatra.

Some months had passed after the death of Charles, during which a new form of government had been established.—By a vote of the commons the existence of the upper House was

guished, and it was made
proclaim, or otherwise ackn
Stuart, commonly called the
as King of England.

A council of state had bee
of forty-one members—among
fax, Cromwell, Bradshaw, w
the younger Vane — on wh
duties of the executive, with a
should resign their powers to
as the republic should be sett
nent and stable basis.

Some disaffection of the arm
which for a short time threaten
ous to the new government, we
punished rigorously by the co

had already been acknowledged and received with greetings by many of the most powerful potentates of Europe.

Spring had grown into early summer; but while all things around him gradually wore a fuller and more perfect beauty—while buds expanded into full-blown blossoms, and woods put on their freshest garniture of green, and the rich fields gladdened the farmer's heart by their broad promise—the hopes of Ardenne had been blighted more and more, had faded into sorrows, had been seared and dried up into absolute despair. A very few days after the King's execution, he had been summoned to repair with speed to Woodleigh, where Sibyl—his beloved—his last and only link to the cold world—was dangerously if not desperately ill.—He found her—as his crushed heart too truly presaged—already dying. He watched beside her couch, and day by day marked the successive inroads of disease on that dear form!—He saw her hourly growing weaker, paler and less

blighted, and cut off already from communion with the sons of men, than when she was the pride and admiration of all who chanced to meet her.

It has been said already that there was no disguise between them; and now, when every possibility of selfish motives was removed; when there could be no more the slightest misconstruction; when all asperities were, in truth, softened down by the approach of that great alchymist of mortal deeds and mortal causes—death! all that had been before obscure and intricate was rendered plain as noonday; and Sibyl shamed not to confess her sense of her own hapless error, an error which had robbed her lover of all chance of happiness on earth—had robbed herself of life!

Ardenne, melted and tortured by contrition, half repentant, as has been shown already, of the part which he had played, and morbidly dissatisfied with the result of the experiment, sat groaning in the spirit by her pillow, and

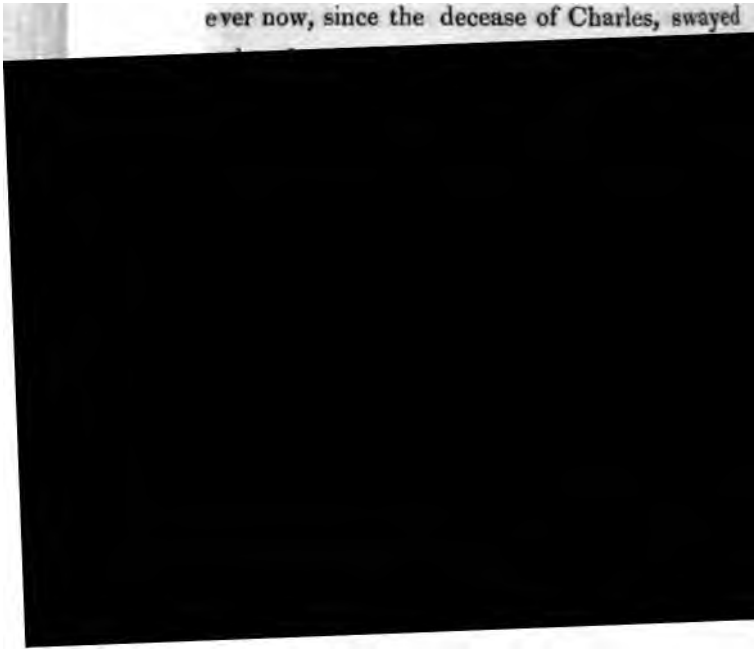
But in these bitter mo
the true woman's part, sti
forter—to point the real
health and happiness she
admitted such, that he had
—and the more real benefi
up hereafter from the anarch
to the fall of Charles, as
decline of day only to bring
and mellow moonshine.

At length she died—and
alone—alone for ever!—w
earth—without one kindred
whose veins the pure blood
its unmingled current — w
hope—without one feeling

rational and real liberty, as at the war's commencement, and how much further from the blessed calm of an establised peace! A cold and bitter mood of grief had fallen on him, obscuring all his brighter qualities, and overpowering the energies of a mind once as elastic and pervading as the tempered steel.—It had changed his very soul.—It had made him even more than all the previous sorrows he had known, the previous perils he had faced, the previous disappointments he had writhed in bearing—an altered—a new man!—The brilliant dreams, and the warm hopes of youth had faded long ago!—The high and noble purposes of middle age—the pure ambition to be a benefactor not of his countrymen alone, but of the universal human race—the steady longing after an honest and clear fame—the sacred fire of patriotism itself,—all these were now, if not extinct, so chilled and overwhelmed by the dull apathy of settled woe, that it had needed much

again to raise them into luminous and active being.

It was just when he was the most absorbed in this sad stupor, some three or four days only after the death of his lost Sibyl, that an express arrived to rouse him from his sullen musings among the shades of Woodleigh, which had become once more his own as being next of kin to his untimely-parted cousin. It was an express from that great man, who more than ever now, since the decease of Charles, swayed



skill and subtlety had the arch-schemer wound along his path, onward, still onward!—that it was quite impossible to say at what point of his ascent, or if indeed at all, he had passed the confines of sincerity and patriotism, to enter the stern regions of ambition.

That Cromwell at this time enjoyed a power eminently great, and at the same time dangerous, Ardenne could not deny;—that he had attained to that power by his own energy was self-apparent; but whether he had framed the course which had exalted him according to the dictates of religion and of conscience, and so found his own high fortunes while seeking but for England's weal; or whether he had struggled forward to his own grandeur, as his only goal, he could not, even now, decide. One thing he clearly saw, that the experiment had for the present failed!—that, by the death of Charles, tyranny was indeed put down;—but put down only to be followed by anarchy—or by a tyranny more mighty than the former. But seeing this,

should I hesitate to pour out the dregs of an unprized and wearisome existence, why should I hesitate to cast away life itself—a life which only separates me now from her—if that my life can profit England?—I will, as I have begun, so persevere. Consistency and honour now alone are left to me, and never will I disobey their dictates!—A name, which, though I never shall transmit to others, I, at least, its last owner —never, never will disgrace!"

He took his solitary way to London, and if not the less sad, was at the least less bitterly absorbed by sorrow; he mingled, with a grave aspect, certainly, and a subdued demeanour, in the chance society of men, and struggled, not all unsuccessfully, tos hake off a melancholy which, though it was a luxury to indulge, he felt it was a duty to repress. The third day toward nightfall found him already in the heart of the metropolis, which under its new masters wore a composed and steady aspect of society, not

on various matters connected with state policy, and questions of the day—

"You have not heard, I know, Sir Edgar," Cromwell began abruptly after a little pause, "of the new trust the parliament hath now of late conferred on me?—even the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, with command of the forces needful to crush the embers of this accurst rebellion, that yet devours the land!

"I have not," answered Ardenne—"have you accepted it?"

"Surely I have," returned the general—"for of a truth, the Commons House, ay! and the council of state also, were very urgent! yea! unto the taking no denial! For at the first I would have fain declined it. Truly my soul is sick of war and tumult, and would retire to the privacy of humble and domestic life. But as I say, they would take no denial! And, moreover, after a while, diligently searching the Lord's will, praying myself with earnest zeal, and

"It is a great trust," Ardenne again answered coldly, "the *greatest* for a subject! When set you forth?"

"Speedily," Cromwell replied; "right speedily. But ere I go, I have yet one thing to perform—the parliament, as not content with their high honours it hath done me, commands me to appoint all the chief officers. The master of the horse is a high post—important, onerous, and of great weight! Now, Edgar Ardenne, though we have differed somewhat lately, I do know you able, valliant, honest, and trusty—such are the attributes needful for this great office—go with me—it is yours!"

"I thank you," Edgar replied, perfectly unmoved. "Think me not ignorant of the honour; nor yet ungrateful, when I decline that honour. In truth I am sick of blood—blood of my countrymen! I would to God no drop of it had been shed here in England—for I do fear me very much it hath been shed in vain."

Oliver was evidently discomposed; he rose

making earthworms great! creation is the Lord's and the Lord's only! But I do say, that my fortunes shall be thy fortunes also! and my hopes thine! Lo you! I have a daughter—one yet a maid—comely too, in the flesh—discreet, and virtuous and sage—even my youngest—Frances! Again! I say not that I will give her to thee in the bonds of wedlock; for truly hearts cannot be given and transferred like golden dross—neither do I esteem it wise or lawful for a parent to do any force to those most strong and inward inclinations! But this I will say—for it is a truth; I do profess to you a very truth!—that I believe the maid hath looked not hitherto on any man to love him—and that rather than any man on earth would I see thee my son-in-law! Thine own high qualities, so that the Lord look down upon this work, will do the rest! Give me thine hand; say that thou wilt go with me! Surely thou shalt be next in power unto myself—next in the glory of the deeds we shall accomplish in the Lord's

pect, I will oppose you to the death! Pause! pause! and oh! consider! it is a little thing to be a king!—a tyrant! an usurper! It is the mightiest of all things—to have the power to be so—and the virtue to decline that power! Be, as you may, your country's friend, its guardian, its father! Beware! I say, beware, how you attempt to be its ruler! Better is a pure conscience than a golden bauble! He who cannot err, hath said, 'What shall it avail a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul!' You say you love me, I did once love, honour, esteem, ay, venerate you,—you—Oliver Cromwell! and rather would I hew off the best limb of my body, than see you play the part which I do fear you meditate! Answer me not, sir; no profession can convince me. Actions, actions, sir, actions only can prove to me your truth. Sincerely I pray God that I may be in error. Sincerely I pray God you may be strengthened to cast temptation far behind you, to be the great, the glorious, the immortal benefactor of your land. You *may* be

"Can it be so?" cried Cromwell, in a low thoughtful tone, "and hath he read my inward soul—read it more truly than myself?" He strode across the room with a loud step and a kingly port. "Not king—but the first man in England!—ha!" But again his proud glance sunk, his firm step faltered, and he struck his bosom with the eager violence of passionate repentance. "Avaunt, avaunt! get thee behind me!—no, no! he erred! Yet had he well-nigh made me deem myself a villain! 'Not king, but the first man in England!' Well—first in virtue! first in sincere, God-seeking piety! First, it may be, in good report—which men call fame!—in the Lord's favour, and the people's love! But not—not first in power, or wealth, or rank! not first, as that bold Ardenne said, in villany! No, no! *He* erred, and *I* am sound at heart—my breast is proof to thy devices! Avaunt! thou crafty devil, I am strong in virtue!"

He saw not Ardenne any more for many a

umphant clangour of their military music waking the merriest echoes, behind their adored leader!—and above all, he heard the thundering acclamations of the multitude, as that pomp swept along!—and with a heavy sigh, he turned from that sight, in all other eyes so glorious, and majestic—a sigh for Cromwell's glory!—a sigh for England's peace!

CHAPTER I.

The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well.

Marmion.

A YEAR had passed since Cromwell, invested with his new dignity of lord-lieutenant, landed in Dublin Bay—a year—during the course of which his arms, attended every where by vic-

strongest holds were levelle
of fire-blackened stones que
blood of their massacred de
year of merciless destruction-
discriminating slaughter—a
deep stain on the name o
before attainted by the dark
a year, the miseries of whi
they have branded that nam
on the Irish with such impe
even to this day their dir
"The curse of Cromwell be u

From his career of victory
well was summoned in the
1650 to return to England
Prince of Wales, who had

appointed Ireton his lord-deputy, and Ludlow his lieutenant of the horse, delegating all his powers to them, and leaving them to finish what he had so effectually set in motion, and in a very short space was in London to receive the parliament's instructions. Here he was welcomed with the highest honours and rewards; and, after some delay, owing to the refusal of Lord Fairfax, who was himself a presbyterian, to command against the Scottish presbyterians —a refusal which, with much urgency and, it would seem, with real and unfeigned sincerity, Oliver strove to combat—he set forth, invested with the supreme command of the land forces of the parliament, to crush, as was expected, at a single blow the power of the Scottish royalists, and lead the second Charles in triumph to the footstool of the proud republicans, or to expel him from the kingdom of his fathers a despairing fugitive.

In this their overweening confidence, however, the English government were for a time

that, after two or three sm
mishes and much manœuvr
ran Lesley, who resolutely
action, he was compelled b
provisions, to reship five
from Musselburgh for Be
remnant, described by one
"a poor, shattered, hung
army," to fall back in sou
bar, where he might be su
and storeships.

Having been pressed so
tish horse, on his retreat f
Haddington, that he was a
danger, his rear-guard, wh

favour of a misty night he arrived within a few miles of Dunbar late in the evening of the first day of September.

In the morning of the second, Oliver's army lying in a low swampy plain, with an exhausted country in their rear, a mountainous ridge held by a superior force in front, a stormy and tempestuous sea upon his right, and the weather such as to prevent any communication with the fleet, scarce any situation can be fancied more desperate and appalling than that of the invaders. Throughout that morning he saw the host of Lesley holding the hill with resolute determination, in a position of such formidable strength, that he himself has mentioned it as one wherein ten men were better to hinder than a hundred to make a way.

Below this hill was a small narrow plain, running down on the right hand to the sea, between the ridge then occupied by Lesley, and a deep cleugh or dell, through which a rapid and impetuous stream found its way to the

Park. But toward evening
movement in the hostile lin
afterward a mighty shout r
Immediately he leaped upon
galloping forth with a handf
guard, rode to the brink of
whence he might behold the
pouring tumultuously down fro
ing station into that narrow str
very numbers would but opera
selves, vociferously calling on
"lead them down to Ramoth
might slay the foe—even t
accursed Philistine!"

For a while Cromwell gaz
them without speaking, and b
his lip and the deep sneer

pikemen—brigade after brigade of guns—and finally the horse and the reserve, with Scotland's royal banner—shouting "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon"—their favourite war-cry,—the gloom which had sat on his brow for many days passed suddenly, and was succeeded by a wild gleam of joy—"The Lord," he cried, flinging his arm aloft, and giving the spur to his charger till he plunged and bolted from the earth,—"the Lord of hosts—he hath delivered them into mine hands!"—And while the numbers of the Scottish, vastly superior to his own, and ten times more than could be marshalled fittingly upon that battle-ground, were drawing up as best they might their crowded and disordered ranks, where they had neither room to fight, nor any way by which to fly if routed, he coolly reconnoitred the ravine passable only at one point, and that, though pervious even to artillery, a rugged ford between steep banks shadowed with timber-trees, and commanded by earthy mounds scarped naturally by the wintry

an advanced guard at
this all-important station—
best regiments to force th
earliest dawn of day—and t
design to his assembled offic
ordering all things to be in p
tack, with the first glimmeri
himself down on his camp-b
any part of his attire, and s
his attendants had no easy
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when the appointed hour ha

Ere he was in the saddl
fully; and then, having re
the due execution of the o
plan depended, he galloped
ing to find all in readiness,

night Lesley, aware of the importance of that point, had utterly cut off the guard detached for the defence of the ravine—so utterly, indeed, that not a soldier had escaped to bear the tidings of defeat to his superiors—and occupied it with a force equal, at least, to that which Cromwell had appointed to oppose him.

The sky was gray already, but the approach of morning was delayed, or at the least obscured, by a thick mist arising from the sea-bord, and spreading over the flat land on which both armies had slept upon their weapons, in grim preparation for the coming strife. A powerful horse-regiment which had been chosen to advance the foremost, was in the very act of passing; some indeed had crossed the stream and were laboriously struggling up the banks on the Scotch side, and the rest were battling with the heavy current.

At this moment a tremendous fire of musketry and ordnance was poured upon them while in confusion; and when, despite this fearful ob-

the veteran Lesley.

While they were figl
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best brigades of horse
infantry repulsed—his a

much less attempted to assist the charge, or cover the retreat, of his defeated squadrons.

A dark red flush rose to his cheek and brow—his eye flashed lurid fire—as Oliver dashed up to the artillerists, fiercely commanding them with a voice tremulous and hoarse from ire, to "shoot sharply and upon the instant, or, as the Lord Jehovah liveth, ye shall swing from these oaks ere the sun rises!"

Awed by his threats and stimulated by his presence, they struggled nobly to redeem their error;—gun after gun belched forth its cloud of smoke and flame, and the shot plunged, with accurate aim and awful execution, into the serried masses of the Scotch, enabling the discomfited and shattered cavalry to draw off and repass the stream.

"Ride for your life!" cried Oliver to one, the nearest, of his staff, "and bring up my pike-regiment,—mine own, I say—under the trusty Goff—and Jepherson's horse-regiment, and Lumley's musketeers. Ride, I tell thee,

on the spur. And thou," he added, "away to Massey, Kingsland—let him bring up more guns—more guns!"

Too impatient to await the execution of his orders in quiet inactivity, he galloped furiously, attended only by a slender staff, and captain's guard of cuirassiers, down the steep banks of the ford. There he stood, sternly gazing on the advancing ranks of Lesley, a mark for the artillery, and even for the smallarms of the Scottish, the balls from which shivered the trees and tore

a prolonged flourish of their trumpets announced the presence of the enemy; who now, the independents having been forced back bodily from their position, were crowding down in numbers almost irresistible in their turn to attempt the passage.

The eye of Cromwell for the first time grew anxious, and his lip quivered visibly, as with the blast, the heavy tramp of the advancing pikemen was heard above the ripple of the water, and the bright heads of their long weapons were glimmering above the mist-wreaths, which partially obscured the ranks that bore them. A mounted officer dashed up to him—spoke a few hurried words—and, ere the gloom had cleared from Cromwell's brow, the steady march of his own regiment fell joyously upon his ears! They halted, as the heads of their long files came up, abreast of their commander; while with their matches ready lighted six hundred musketeers, under the gallant Lumley, hastened to line the hither bank, availing them-

selves of every crag or stunted bush whereby to hide themselves, and whence to pour their unseen volleys on the host below.

With a few words, fiery and terse, and full of that enthusiastic confidence which had so wonderfully gained the hearts of all that followed him, Oliver now addressed his chosen veterans. In deep, and as it might seem sullen silence they attended while he spoke; but as he ended such a shout arose as startled Lesley's host and roused them from their dreams of vic-

ordnance of the Scottish, killing the cannoniers, dismounting their light pieces, and silencing, after a single ill-directed volley, their fruitless efforts.

Taken thus absolutely by surprise, the presbyterian squadrons reeled in their turn, and louder from the depths of the ravine arose that awful shout, "The Lord, the Lord of hosts!" as, through the waters whose current, dark with human gore, flowed feebly now, choked and obstructed with the bodies of the dead and dying, that irresistible and never-conquered band charged onward, bearing the relics of the enemy before them, with shriek, and yell, and execration, up at the very pike's point, up to the level ground whence, flushed with hope of easy triumph, they had but now descended, and still the well-aimed shot of Lumley's skirmishers fell thick among the flyers.

With half a glance Cromwell perceived his advantage: and with him to perceive was instantly to profit by it. Putting himself at the

head of Jefferson's brigade of ironsides, which came up at a rapid trot, just as Goff's pikemen were appearing on the further brow, brandishing high in air his formidable rapier, and pointing with a grim smile to the strife raging and reeling opposite, he spurred his charger down the bank! Two bounds bore him across the chasm, and, with a louder clang of corslet, spur, and scabbard, than had resounded yet that day, down rushed those zealot horsemen.

The morning hitherto had been dull, gloomy,

panse of the wide German Ocean, now calm and cradling on its azure bosom the friendly vessels of the commonwealth, that loomed like floating castles through the dispersing fog.

It was a wonderful, a spirit-stirring change, and he who witnessed its effects the first, inspired by the sublimity of what he looked upon, struck by a thought no less sublime, cried out, flinging his arm aloft, in proud anticipation of his coming triumph, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered!"

The aspect of the man, rising as it were suddenly from out the bowels of the earth, the stern composure of his halt, the simultaneous outburst of the sunbeams; and, above all, the wonderful quotation, delivered in a voice so loud as to be heard by hundreds of both hosts, and yet so passionless and clear as to strike every heart with something of that awe, which would attach to aught miraculous, completed what the ordinary means of warfare had so well commenced.

foot, pellmell, the cannon-shot making huge gaps in their dense columns, it was impossible that they, or any, should hold out. They broke, they scattered, they retreated not, but fled in wild and irretrievable dismay, pursued, cut down, and slaughtered by the fresh cavalry of Cromwell, who for eight miles had execution of the flyers; while the triumphant general calling a halt, when he perceived the battle won, sung, with his legions swelling the stormy chorus, the hundred and seventeenth psalm, in honour of that Lord who, as he said, "after the first repulse, had given up his enemies as stubble before the godly arms, and the victorious weapons, of his own elected people."

dered by Dundas without, indeed, if the assertions of the royalists are to be credited, any sufficient reason.

During the winter Oliver remained in the metropolis of Scotland, engaged for the most part in disputations with the presbyterian clergy, who hated him with bitter and incessant rancour; and here he was attacked by a strong fit of ague, threatening to undermine his constitution, and actually reducing him so low, that it was early in July before he was prepared to take the field.

Meanwhile, Charles had been crowned at Perth, on the first day of January, '51, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, most of the nobles being present in their robes of state and coronets—had sworn both to the "national covenant," and to the "league and covenant"—had levied a strong army under command of the stout veteran Lesley—and had taken post, meaning to act on the defensive, on strong ground in the neighbourhood of Torwood. Here for some days the hostile armies faced each other, ma-

mishes occurred almost ev
cavalry and outposts, but n
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by a game in which he had
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transported his whole army
and in two days making him
town of Perth.

Cromwell's object in this l
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wood on the 31st, Charles t

reinforced by a great rising of the royalists *en masse* from all the northern counties.

The consternation throughout England at the news of this advance was general and excessive. The parliament were in extremity of terror and suspicion; Bradshaw himself, stout-hearted as he was in public, privately owned his fears, and more than half suspected the good faith of Cromwell. Their terrors grew more and more real daily, when it was told in London that the cavaliers of Lancashire were gathering head under Lord Derby, and the presbyterians threatening to make common cause with them under their major-general Massey; and in good sooth, had it not been for the insane fanaticism of the Scottish clergy, who, with a fierce intolerance that ruined their own cause, would suffer none to join the standard of the King, without subscribing to the covenant, the forces of the royalists would have been truly formidable, and might have, not improbably, succeeded in restoring Charles to his ancestral throne. But, happily for England

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bringing on a general action, were forced to draw off, and permit the enemy to enter Worcester unmolested. Here he was instantly proclaimed amid the acclamations of the mob, and the good wishes, faint though faithful, of the loyal gentlemen assembled in that city.

While tarrying here it became visible to Charles and his advisers that succours came not in by any means so rapidly as they had hoped; that the Welsh cavaliers, who had been most severely handled in their last insurrections, were not disposed to risk a general rising; and that there was but little hope of any common or extensive movement of the royalists, until some such advantage should be gained, as would at least be a justification to their daring. In this predicament it was decided that they should await Cromwell's arrival from the north, and give him battle there before the walls of Worcester.

They had not long to wait, for with his wonted energy of mind and motion that able leader had pursued the footsteps of his enemy; so that in a very few days of the King's arrival the

—"a day, whereon from his first childhood, by the Lord's wondrous grace up to that present time, he never had attempted aught, but he had therefrom reaped a golden harvest.

"Wherefore," he said, "let us fall on more boldly—mindful of the last anniversary which saw the glorious blessing of Dunbar—and putting trust in our own stout right-arms, and in the aid of that Lord, who is all in all—trusting, I say, that this shall prove a final and decisive end to our labours—yea! and a crowning mercy!"

Fleetwood was then commanded to force the passage of the Team at noon; when they supposed the cavaliers would have abandoned any thoughts of a decisive action for that day. While Cromwell should himself establish a bridge of boats across the Severn at Bunshill.

The morning of the third broke gloriously and bright. The independent forces were full of ardour for the onset, inflamed even beyond their wont by the prophetic exhortations of their leader, who, himself kindling like a war-horse to

instantly along his whole line, and repulsed the Scots. Those sturdy troops, however, rallied immediately, thus hoping to afford their countrymen a chance of breaking Cromwell's regiments on the other side the Severn.

The ground on which they fought, though for the most part level, was intersected every where by thick strong fences of old thorn with banks and ditches; and each of these positions was lined with musketry, and was defended with an obstinate and dogged courage, that cost the independents hundreds on hundreds of their bravest soldiers. One by one they were forced, however, at the pike's point; and still, as Fleetwood's men advanced, the Scotch pike-regiments rushed on, charging with more of spirit than they had displayed throughout the whole course of the war, and still, when forced to give way, leisurely and in perfect order, falling back to the next fence, which was by this time glancing with the sharp volleys of the musketeers.

But, notwithstanding all their efforts, ere night-

On the other side the
with equal fury, and alm
during five hours at the
had, from a flying battery
menced a cannonade upon
the main gate of the tow
his forces in two lines to
charged at all points by
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simultaneously from seve
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militia, with such enthusi
drove them back in abs
Cromwell's battering-gun

brought out his cavalry, and charged again while the militia of the independents were forced pellmell into the ranks of the reserve, he hardly could have failed gaining a complete victory. But his horse, save one squadron, were within the city,—he saw his error when it was too late; for the keen eye of Cromwell saw it likewise, and gave him not a second's space even to struggle to redeem it. Leading his cavalry—his own invincibles—at a quick trot by squadrons through the intervals of the defeated regiments, he set up one of his triumphant hymns, and sweeping on, like a spring tide, with full five thousand horse, he beat the victors back—regained the cannon, sabring the artillerists over their guns; and while his cavalry reformed, brought up the whole of his reserve—the conquerors of Marston, Naseby, and Dunbar—column on column—with a succession of tremendous charges, that no troops then in the world could have resisted.

Scarce had his musketry and pikemen shattered the Scottish masses, ere he again came

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The last beams of the
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then a heavy cannonade
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his forces off for a short
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light was yet lingering
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instantly a dozen rockets
ing sky—and then, with
leading them on, sword in

structive, they hurried to the walls, which now from every port-hole, battlement, and embrasure, poured forth the ringing volleys of their ordnance.

Scarcely ten minutes passed before the cannon again ceased—and the loud roar of thousands, blent with the maddened shrieks of women, and all the horrid noises of a captured city, announced that all was over. The gates were instantly thrown open, and in poured the furious zealots. Throughout the livelong night, the din, and rage, and agony, and sacrilege continued. Full fifteen hundred men were slaughtered in the streets.—The thoroughfares were choked with corpses—the kennels ran knee-deep with human gore!

The morning of the fourth arose, like that of the preceding day, serene and glorious. The massacre was checked, peace was restored, and comparative tranquillity; the King was a despairing fugitive—with scarce a hope remaining, even of personal escape; his army was annihil-

exultation, the winner return
Giver of all Goodness—for th
MERCY.

CHAPTER III.

Thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates.

Childe Harold.

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
And freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise, when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?

Ibid.

By that one blow the empire of the parliament was confirmed through every corner of Great Britain, the last hope of the Stuarts was in the

melody shall never be forgotten while England's language lives upon the earth—the lyre of the immortal Milton!

Although no king, Cromwell was truly the first man in England. Modestly, however, and decorously, and without any symptom of disorganising or misproud ambition, did he bear his high honours. Wisdom and mercy marked his elevation in no less degree, than energy and valour signalized his rise.

His first act in the senate of the regenerated land was to obtain the passing of a general amnesty in the behalf of all who had engaged in the late war; with the exceptions only of some two or three, so obstinately and incurably devoted to the exiled family, and hostile to the commonwealth, that public safety rendered their public punishment a measure not of cruelty or vengeance, but of necessity.

His next act was to procure a vote for taking speedily into consideration the expediency of fixing a time for their own dissolution. The

name, desirous solely of their own emolument and power, and as entirely different from that magnificent assembly which had resisted the first Charles in all the terrors of his puissant sovereignty, as it is possible for one deliberative body to be different from another.

This then was the House which now passed a vote, securing to themselves the supreme power of the realm, for three more years at least, in absolute defiance of the wishes of the people, of the army, and of the wisest patriots of the kingdom.

Scotland, meantime, subdued completely by the arms of Cromwell, wielded by Monk, his able deputy, was in a state of orderly and calm tranquillity widely at variance with the confused and hopeless anarchy, in which it had been plunged for centuries by the fierce and continual rivalry of its dogmatic and intolerant sectarians; who had been now at length, by the wise energy of Oliver, compelled to endure one another peacefully, and to forbear the angry disputations that

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was perforce quiet; and En
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time, under a firm and libe
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iotn to the human frame. Ab
the ocean in triumphant, if n
tery; baffling at every fresh
duing the brave and dogged F
so lately ploughed the narrow
their mast-heads, as though th
their island foemen from thei
dust,—bringing in unresiste

nation) offer resistance to that people now, which they had set at nought while governed by a king; winning respect from the cold and haughty Spaniard; making her fame as universal, and her flag as widely known, as winds could blow or billows bear; and justifying the high boast of Oliver, which he had uttered years before to Ardenne, while yet an undistinguished member in the great council of the kingdom, that the time should come wherein the quality of Englishmen should be as widely and as greatly honoured, as ever was the name of antique Roman.

It was then evident that there was now no cause of fear, which should in any degree sanction the continued *usurpation* (for such indeed it was) of the parliamentarian party, who seemed at this time to have again determined on trying the same line of measures, which had failed so signally before the death of the first Charles. At this time England had been, for nearly four years, under the nominal form of a republic.—The merit of successive parliaments and unbiassed

most uncompromising favourers of universal freedom in elections, and universal toleration (papistry alone excluded) in religious matters.

A council had been held some days before, at Lenthall's house, of all the most important personages of the land, civil and military; whereat it was debated gravely, whether it would be better to perpetuate the commonwealth on terms to be fixed now immutably, or to establish once again the government as vested in a limited mixed monarchy. The officers in general were adverse to all form of royalty, as holding the name 'King,' alone and in itself, subversive of true freedom!—The lawyers on the other hand, with the sage Whitelocke at their head, maintained that the time-honoured constitution of the land, as comprehending Commons, Lords, and King, was suited better, both for stability and safety, to the feelings and the principles of Englishmen than a new form of democratic sway.

Cromwell during this council, as before, held himself much aloof; but at the last, when urged

holden for four-fifths of the members of the Commons, the one-fifth remaining, to hold their seats for a yet further time, and to possess the right of sanctioning or disallowing the admission of the newly-chosen delegates, as they might deem them honest and worthy vessels, or unsuited to the work in hand.

At a late hour Oliver, who was waiting at Whitehall in his own private chambers, was advertised of these strange and unjust proceedings; and instantly commanding a company of soldiers to repair to the house, entered, and took his seat among the members. He was more plainly—nay, even slovenly attired than at any time when he had appeared in public for several years. His dress was of plain and course cloth, all black, doublet, cloak, and hose; with stockings of gray worsted rolled up to his mid-thigh.

While the debate continued, Cromwell sat immersed apparently in thought, and listening most attentively to the opinions of the different orators. The speaker, at length, rose, as if to

men who had bled for them in the field, their tampering with the false and time-serving presbyterians.

"And for what," he cried, with loud and vehement tones,—"for what all this? what, but to perpetuate your own ill-gotten power—to replenish your own empty purses—empty through riot—and debauchery—and bribery—and every kind of ill, which it befits not *you* to perpetrate—and which it were to *me* degrading, even to mention or to think of. But now, I say," he went on, stamping fiercely on the ground, "your time hath come! The Lord hath disowned you! The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath done with you! He hath no need of you any more!—Lo he hath judged you, and cast you forth, and chosen fitter instruments to him, to execute that work in which you have dishonoured him!"

"Order!" exclaimed one of the bolder of the members. "Order!—I rise to order—never have I yet heard any language so unparliamentary! so

from every pore and vein, his broad breast panting and heaving with emotion, and his entire aspect displaying the most ungovernable and tremendous passions.

"You are no parliament I say," he shouted at the pitch of his stentorian voice, "you are no parliament! Ho! bring them in!—without there! Bring them in!"

There was a sudden pause—a moment of unutterable terror!—for such was the expression painted upon the faces of the grave members of the long parliament. When, years before, a king had dared to violate in a far less degree the privileges of that high assemblage, their own undaunted valour, fired by a sense of right—a proud uncompromising feeling of their own inborn worth — had wellnigh armed those patriots to battle with such weapons as chance afforded them against the licensed cut-throats of the Sovereign. But as the door flew open, and Colonel Worseley entered with a guard of twenty musketeers, blank and base apprehensions sat on the pallid brows

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person, who from so latel
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"This is not honest!"
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surprise; "it is against r
honesty!"

Words cannot picture,
not describe, the change t
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animal and uncontrollable

thought—the deepest sneer of scorn, of loathing and unutterable undisguised contempt succeeded.

"Sir Harry Vane!" he replied in a low stern whisper, which drove the blood curdling through his veins. "O Sir Harry Vane! The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane! Honesty and Sir Harry Vane! Morality and Harry Vane!—who if he so had pleased, might have prevented this! who is a juggler—a mere hypocrite—and hath not common *honesty himself*! A parliament! I do profess, a precious parliament!—of drunkards!—knaves!—extortioners—adulterers!—Lo! there," he added, pointing to Challoner,—"there sits a noted wine-bibber—a very glutton and a drunkard! There!" casting his eyes towards Henry Marten and Sir Peter Wentworth, "there two most foul adulterers!"

Then turning on his heel, as if he had already said enough, he waved his hand toward

" I," exclaimed Lentha
no violence was offered
scared spirits, " I am the
lawfully by its members
of those same members
never quit its precincts,
Then Harrison stepped
the long hall to the
musketeers; he laid
shoulder, and prayed hi
further words, he came
putting on his hat, de
crest-fallen and astound
Algernon Sydney foll
with a statelier mien a
more of the members

chance of any opposition to his will, Cromwell had stood in silence, with his arms folded on his breast, facing the speaker's chair with a dark scowl upon his brow and his lips rigidly compressed; but now, when he perceived that all, without more words, were skulking away from the house, he once again addressed them. "It is you," he exclaimed,—"it is you, who have thrust this on me. Night and day have I prayed the Lord that he would slay me, rather than put me on the doing of this work."

"Then wherefore do it," asked Allen bluntly, ere he left the house, "if that be so grievous to you? There is yet time enough to undo that which is already done—and, as your conscience tells you, *ill*-done, my Lord Cromwell!"

"Conscience! Ha! Conscience! Alderman," retorted Oliver, "and what did *thine* tell *thee*, when thou, as treasurer of the army, didst embezzle much more than one hundred thousand pounds to thine own uses? What sayest thou to that

Speaker's chair. "What shall we do," he said, "with this fool's bauble? Here, carry it away!" and, at the word, a private of the guard bore off that ancient emblem of the people's delegated power, on which not to preserve his soul, Charles Stuart would have dared lay a finger of offence —and bore it off at the first bidding of the simple citizen of a small English borough, raised by his own strange sagacity and the indomitable firmness of his simple will, to a far loftier station than the proudest despot of the East.

Cromwell then snatched the instrument of dissolution from the trembling fingers of the clerk; ordered the great doors to be locked; and, girt by his devoted guard, returned to his own palace at Whitehall, in all save name a king.

The same day saw the dissolution of the council—and, ere the members were forgotten (short as the period was before they were so), the army and the navy sent their addresses to the Lord General, declaring that they were content to live or

die in the support of these his measures; and every corner of the island resounded with the loud hymns of the fanatics, exulting that 'the great and long-desired reformation was now near the birth! blessing the God of heaven, who had called Cromwell forth, and led him on, not only in the high places of the field, but also among those mighty ones whom God hath left—to the dissolving of the late parliament—rejoicing that the fifth monarchy, the kingdom of Messiah was at hand, and that the promised reign—the

dark solitude of his nocturnal chamber, " True! true!—It *was* true, that the spirit thundered at midnight in mine ears! —Lo! the accomplishment is here!—Am I not—am I not the first in England—though I be not as yet called King?"

CHAPTER I

Cyriack, this three years' day the
To outward view, of blemish or o
Bereft of light, their seeing have
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight
Of sun, or moon, or star, throug
Or man or woman. Yet I argue
Against Heaven's hand or will, n
Of Heart or Hope ; but still bear
Right onward. What supports m
The conscience, friend, to have lo
In liberty's defence, my noble tas
Of which all Europe rings from s

In the old parlour, still d
years had flown with the

fire which threw a brilliant care-dispelling light upon the features still comely and unwrinkled, upon the soft hair scarcely streaked with any tinge of gray, and the bright eye still clear and vivid, as though it were not robbed of its intelligence, sat that far greater and more holy poet, who, as himself has told us, did not

> " sometimes forget
> Those other two, equall'd with *him* in fate,
> So were *he* equall'd with them in renown,
> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides—"

but to whose blameless spirit, fraught as it was with knowledge of his own mighty genius, it was not given to know, that he should no less supersede in fame, in immortality of praise, the objects of his emulation, than he exceeded them in the solemnity, the fervour, and the cultivation of his unrivalled intellect.

He sat not now, however, as before, alone; for two young females, not perhaps, to speak strictly, beautiful, but still attractive, and bearing in their pale features undoubted tokens of

ing from its vocal tubes t
religious harmony, which ever
source of inspiration to the
nighted parent. The other,
ceived a packet from a servi
passing from the chamber, w
opening it, speaking the while,
though more feminine, and, a
very similar in its peculiar sw
less musically soft than her
unmixed melody.

"If I err not," she said,
from the hand of your much-
Edgar Ardenne."

"Is it indeed?" cried Milton,
spirit-wounded friend—fain w

"Not foreign, sir," she answered; "but surely from your friend. It hath for date, 'The commonwealth's ship Jael, now off Spithead, November 29th.' I will proceed to show you the contents."

And, without further words, she read it out in a clear fluent voice, her father listening all the time with a most earnest and unwavering attention depicted on his pregnant and expressive features.

"How shall I offer to console you, my most honoured and beloved friend,"—thus ran the letter,—"under the grievous dispensation with which it has seemed good to HIM, who cannot err, to make yet further trial of your excellence? If I should set down aught, it would but be, I know, as a weak and whispering sound, when brought beside the powerful and all-assuaging harmonies which your own tutored mind, mature in wisdom and far superior no less in fervid piety to mine than in the gifts of science,

you, no more than I esteem at an inordinate or priceless value — the vain world's voice of praise—and greater far than this the approbation of all good and wise men now, and the eternal reverence and gratitude of ages that shall be hereafter.

"But of this enough; no words of mine, alas! can remedy or soothe those griefs, if there be any, which your own high philosophy has not removed already—and, to assure you of my real sympathy, they are, I know, even more needless—of that you can want no assurance? I would that we could hold more intimate communion—for I have many things to say to you, which I love not to trust to paper;—the rather that that paper *must* now pass under eyes not yours, before its sense can be transmitted to your ears. But since we cannot converse freely face to face, as in more happy days of old,—days which to both of us are now but a delightful memory of things that never can return,—why we must even interchange our

and of right, the master of the liberties and lives of freeborn, but alas no longer free, Englishmen. I may not here disguise from you that shortly after the intelligence of his first usurpation—for such I, for one, hold the dissolution of the parliament, as I may say, at the pike's point, how worthless or inadequate soever it might be—a general council held by the delegates from every vessel of our victorious fleet, voted an address to the general, approving of the measure which I reprobate, and promising to live or die in his support. Nor, I imagine, have I any need to state to you, that neither I, nor a far more important person, to wit, our great commander Blake had any share or portion in this vote or address—both of us for the time holding ourselves content to do our duty to our country against her foreign foes, whatever the complexion of her internal policy. The flag of England must not float less superbly now, than when it overcanopied the crowns of our immortal sovereigns of old.

believe (for we may hear their cannon although it is so hazy that we can see scarce a league to seaward), even now engaged with Van Tromp's rearmost vessels. I send this with the pilot, who shall despatch it by express to London. I pray you once again write to me as one secluded from intelligence of all those things which are most dear to him—we shall, 'tis very like, put back to Portsmouth after action, should it seem fit to the great Moderator of the universe to grant us victory to which our endeavours shall be in no wise wanting.—To Him I now commend you. *Valeas, igitur, haud immemor observantissimi tui.*

"EDGAR ARDENNE."

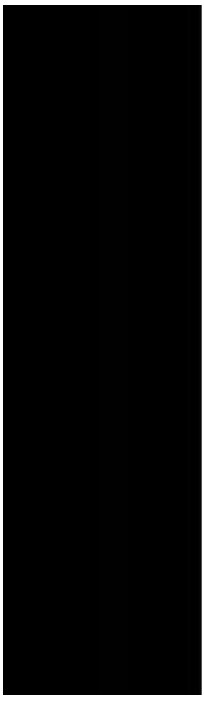
Several times during the space occupied by the reading of this letter, had Milton interrupted it by comments to his gentle secretaries, on its style, its language, and above all, the noble sentiments which breathed in every line of it. At moments he was affected almost to the point of tears, and again at others a bright

" Kind heart," he said,
generous as kind, we must
him. He knoweth not, n
and intimate a secretary
vouchsafed to us in our di
thou thy vellum ready, girl,
endite forthwith, for lo! hi
long delayed upon its rout
xiously, I doubt not, looke
his queries."

Having received an affir
her who had been playing
who now placed herself besi
he commenced dictating in hi
slow and silvery music.

" *To the most noble gentleman,*
Sir Edgar Ard

and honoured friend, addressed from Spithead —hither—previously to the renowned and memorable victory of July, wherein not only was the indefeasible and ancient right of England to be the queen and mistress of the ocean wave, permanently and triumphantly established by the tried arms of our stout seamen, but that most brave and dangerous foe, during whose whole lifetime never had the sturdy Hollanders yielded to us the palm, Van Tromp, was laid at rest from troubling us now any more, —hath but now reached me, although frozen winter is already treading hard on the retiring footsteps of his more lusty predecessor. Grateful, indeed, and pleasing to my spirit are the kind sympathizings which you have therein displayed with my infirmities. Great truly is the loss of light—the shutting out of wisdom from one of its most easy and familiar entrances —the quenching of the finest—the most delicate—and subtile of the senses. But surely under this affliction mighty and manifold, all



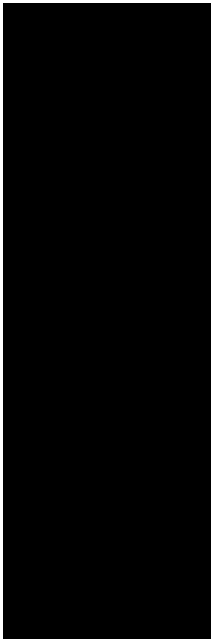
that ere mine eyes were
had performed their tas
with a niggard and rel
such ample execution, su
of success, that not alc
have laboured to upho
sacrifice of God's first
admitted true in every
and I its author robed
repute as might compen
grievous; but more, the il
wretch who dared to st
arena of the schools, hatl
not only by the utter dep
which might before have
—but by his own dece
rankling hatred and mean

spirit. These things then are to me a great and wonderous consolation—first that I, in my degree, have done my duty to my beloved country—secondly, that to her the sacrifice hath not been profitless, nor the devotion unacceptable—and thirdly, that to me it hath brought that best boon of the world's, giving that boon to pant for which is of a truth 'the last infirmity of noble minds,' a high, and though myself I say it, not an unmerited renown. Nor fancy, my kind friend, that in my blindness I am deserted quite and robbed of natural enjoyments—No! by the gracious mercy of that Lord, who never casts us into peril, or temptation, or adversity, but likewise he finds for us a way of escape from the same, I am so piously attended by the affectionate and loving cares of my two daughters, my organists, my secretaries, nurses, and companions, that less acutely do I feel the greatness of my loss, than it were easy for you to imagine. Besides, long since have I looked forward to

block to many—though certainly they too are of the Lord. Needful it was for England's weal, for her salvation I might say, that the self-seeking carnal-minded junto, who arrogated to themselves the rights aud titles of a parliament, and who, having once liberated, were now striving to enslave their country, should be cast forth from the high-places of their usurpation. And by whom could they be cast forth save by the excellent and most wise person whom I am grieved to see that you do still mistrust? Deeply, most deeply, was he moved—and fervently, with tears and prayers continually and supplications earnest and importunate, did he beseech the Ruler of all mortal councils that this cup should pass from him—but it might not be granted. Had Cromwell been ambitious, would he at once have yielded up the power which he for a short time assumed, to a new-chosen parliament assembled at the earliest?—Truly, had he so willed, he might have then been king—but no!

weighing with the balanc
you, how was he so emine
fellows? Did he so ele
his way through patriot
thorny seat of power?—D
unruly and unwilling necl
rebellious citizens? Oh!
signation of the free-electe
succeeded that base remi
fall not one man shed a
all their delegated powers
soon learned they could n
into the hands of him v
saw truly—to be the onl
holding England's helm
bulent and stormy seas a

dazzled by the immortal glare of classic stories, caught by the light which I then deemed a star—a living star of glory—but now have ascertained to be a false delusive meteor—how I contended that as Rome and Greece were free and mighty once, so England should be likewise when modelled to a form of pure democracy? Do you remember this—and your own arguments against me? Now, I confess it, you have conquered—and I, wise as I held myself, was groping like a benighted traveller amid the ruined labyrinths and fallen shrines of false divinities. Truly there is no tyranny like to the tyranny of multitudes. Till the majority of men shall be, as you then said, wise and unselfish, virtuous, honest, and enlightened, till then it is in vain to hope for good from any government administered by that majority,—that hundred-headed, fickle-willed, false-hearted monster, which is called the people. England was tottering on the brink of ruin, in the years that preceded the



headlong—headlong ...
and vice and misery a
has the same guardian
great Oliver stepped
becoming the most m
of ten millions, fierc
tyrannical, than he wh
crimes upon the scaffo
in any former day, we
well defined, so jealo
and so punctually gu
Never was justice yet
without respect of p
was virtue yet so h
never was vice so loa
punished. Each ma

feared abroad — succouring the oppressed in every foreign clime, riding the ocean in secure and undisputed mastery—shielding her sons, in whatsoever quarter of the wide world they may be wandering, by the mere shadow of her name—what more than this could the most ardent patriot wish to be his country's lot?—And this is England's now!—When was it so before? And now that it has once been won for her—won by her Great Protector—who shall e'er wrest it from her—when shall it cease to be?

"But I grow warm—enthusiastical—as who would not, that knows him as he should be known, in praise of this most wondrous man. I have a boon to ask of you—a boon, which I beseech you, by the memory of those pleasant days when we two wandered by the classic waters of the Tiber and Ilissus, when we two mused among the ruins of the Colosseum and the palace tombs of the dead Cæsars, grant to me. It is the first I ever asked of you, and

BOOK V.

The third of the same moon, whose former course
Had all but crown'd him on the self-same day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And show'd not fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

Childe Harold.

After the peace which closed the long and hard-fought struggle with the Hollanders, and decided the supremacy of England on the seas, Ardenne throwing up his commission had left the navy, nor, since that day, had any tidings been received of one, who had a little time before so occupied the general attention, and played a part so eminent in that great drama—the world's History.

Such is renown!—such popular applause! such human gratitude! The man who had preserved the life of Oliver on Winsley-field—who had secured his victory on Marston Moor, who had, to the abandonment of all that could have rendered his own life happy, laboured as the most strenuous and faithful of that great being's followers, so long as he believed him true to England and himself—who, with a yet harder sacrifice, quitted his side the very moment he perceived the dawning symptoms of ambition, in one whom he had loved and honoured, as men but rarely love and honour—this man was now forgotten—forgotten by the land for which he had so deeply suffered—

night had been one of j
From every steeple in t
merry bells had chimed
notes—from park and t
the cannon thundered
every casement, tapers,
sent forth unwonted ra
court and square great
venward, while by their
feasting and carousing
Protector. The previou
nessed the superb and
his installation to the
filled with so much digni
self, with so much profi
his country, during the f
With all the glorious p

headed lords, and acclamations of the multitude, and addresses from the delegates of foreign potentates,—Oliver had been decorated with a robe of purple more splendidly elaborate than the attire of any former king; he had been girded with the rich sword of state; he had received a sceptre massive with solid gold, with which to sway the destinies of England, and a noble copy of the Holy Writ, whereby to wield that sceptre rightly. Generals had borne his train; the parliament had sanctioned his investiture, as performed by its Speaker; the people had assented. In all but name—that "feather in the hat," which adds not any thing to him who wears it, that "toy and bauble," which he had oftentimes rejected, partly in politic accordance to the prejudices of his more fanatical advisers, partly in superstitious, although unconfessed obedience to the prophetic voice, which had forewarned him of his coming greatness—in all but name the citizen of Huntingdon was now the KING OF ENGLAND!

Great—powerful—triumphant—unresisted!

monstrations of respect for his assured and legal dignity, Oliver sat alone. Sumptuously, though still plainly, clad in an entire suit of sable velvet, the jewelled sword of state which had been on that same day of the foregoing year buckled to his side, lying upon the board before him, and bearing in his altered mien, (altered most strangely and adapted to his altered station) that grave majestic dignity which had replaced the bluntness of his soldier-bearing, musing in solitude and silence, the greatest man in England passed the first anniversary of his assured and titled exaltation. There was, however, now no glow of exultation on that pale cheek, and careworn brow—no curl of triumph on the lip—no flash of gratified ambition in the downcast eye. Lines deeper and sterner than the wrinkles of advancing age were scored into that massive forehead—a shadow gloomy and sad had veiled that hollow eye—exhaustion, weariness of heart, sickness of spirit, were written visibly in the pale hollows of that haggard cheek.

There was a trifling sound—a casual rustling

every court in Europe—despatches intercepted —private correspondences opened and searched —and, on the top of all, a pamphlet, fresh from the press with the leaves partly cut, and a broad-bladed dagger, which he had used to open them, lying upon it, as if to mark the place. It bore the ominous and fearful title, KILLING NO MURDER!

After a long pause, during which, though seated, he still watched with an acute and anxious ear for a recurrence of the sound which had disturbed him, he again took up the pamphlet, and with a painful and intense fixedness of study, that marked the harrowing interest he took in its minutest arguments, perused its closely-printed pages.

Midnight had long passed ere he finished the perusal. With a deep sigh he closed and laid down the pamphlet—a sigh, not of regret but of relieved suspense, such as men heave when the catastrophe of some exciting tragedy is over.

"The villain!" he exclaimed. "The perilous and subtle villain!—Damnable arguments—

with steps now falt
short, and rapid!

"And my own
tains the names of
the glory of the you
to the honour of d
by what—what but

His brow becam
and yet again after
its ancient animatio

"A lie!" he cri
triumph, "I do b
malignant lie! fram
It cannot be—it
fellows—my own ir
hundred battles, it
aught but true and l

doceri! But *I* will watch—yea! with my sword drawn, and my light burning—surely the Lord of Hosts will shield his servant from the midnight dagger, as from the open-smiting sword! I will trust no man!—No! not one! Harrison hath looked cold on me of late, and prated much of Ehud and of Saul! and Fleetwood thwarts me! Hacker, who was my friend, is now my bitter foe! And they have dared to liken me to Ahab, and to cry, 'Ha! ha! Hast thou slain, and dost thou take possession?' And Ormond hath come over, as I learn to-day on another Syndercombe and Sexby business! —The snares are set—set I say, on every side! —pitfalls are digged for my feet, and arrows whetted privily against me! and wherefore? —They cannot say that I have wronged one man in England—that I have wrung one penny from their purses, or shed one drop of blood, save in due course of law. They cannot charge me with bloodthirstiness, for I have been long-suffering and merciful—ay! even to a fault!—but I will be so now no longer—Slingsby must come to trial, ay and Hewet—and if condemned,

not free, and powerful,
she heretofore! and ye
take council for my
hearts—even of my o
and 'I shall perish,' t
sieth, 'like dung from
that look upon my g
'Where is he?'"

He paused in his
falling on his knees,
loud sobs and tears.

"My God," he crie
thou thus forsaken me
servant to the power of
the blasphemers to p
surely it is thou—thou,
on me this undesired

tended sheep, than been the ruler of this stiff-necked and ungrateful generation. But thou hast done this violence to my affections, thou hast disposed of thy servant for the best in thine own sight, as from the beginning it was written down—yea! thou didst send thy minister to warn him of thy pleasure, when but a child, foolish, and unregenerate, and a slave to sin, thou didst redeem me from the power of Satan, and sure I was in grace—and he that is in thy grace once can never more relapse! And by my hand thou didst strike down the man Charles Stuart, putting it nightly and by day into my soul, 'thou shalt not suffer him to live',—and thou hast set me up, not for my pleasure nor at my request, but at thine own singular especial choice, for the advancement of thy cause, the welfare and the safety of thy church! And thou hast made me, as thou promisedst of yore—though not a king, but THE FIRST IN ENGLAND! and yet, thou dost abandon now thy servant—thou dost yield up thy true and faithful one, who for thy cause hath yielded up his all, to the delusions of the enemy

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and for j
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cause free
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whereon
less and

"Enter," he said in a stern calm voice, and at the word one of his body-guard stepped in, announcing that a stranger was below, craving to speak privately on matters of great import with his highness.

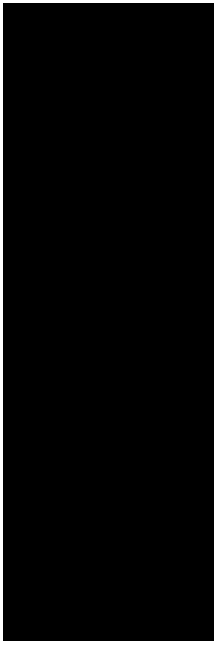
"What like is he?" Oliver asked sharply. "A stranger, ha! Is he a tall pale man, with a deep scar on his right cheek, a mantle of blue broadcloth with a red cape, a slouched hat and red feather?"

"Even so—please your highness," replied the soldier.

"And doth he wear his right hand gloved, resting upon the hilt of a long tuck, and three rings on the fingers of his left?"

"Of a truth I observed not," he began—

"Begone then instantly—demand his name—not that it matters—but mark his hands, I tell thee—they should be as I tell thee. On the forefinger of the left a plain gold hoop, and a large seal-ring of cornelian, with a small guard of jet upon the second. If it be so—say to him, I will go now no further in that matter, but will send one to confer with him at



him away forthwith
in neither case troubl
Begone!"

As the soldier lef
something to himsel
fewer than three pist
his attire, looked
priming, extinguished
locked, double-locked
—then raised the ta
room, opened a pane
gliding through it into
thickness of the wall,
to a remote bedcham
in which he had sl
known only to one old

CHAPTER II.

Perchance she died in youth: it may be bowed
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites—an early death.

Childe Harold.

The power, the wealth, and the prosperity of England daily and almost hourly increased. The ravages of war had long since disappeared from her deep velvet pastures and her happy homes. Every religion was endured, except when its professors intermeddled in state matters; all parties, whether cavalier, or presbyterian, or fifth monarchist, shared equally the law's protection, alike relied on the Pro-

to please, no general prosperity enough to satiate, the people, craving eternally something new—losing the tangible realities of present, in the dim longings after future happiness—forgetting benefits conferred—ungrateful for past merits—light-headed, fickle, and false-hearted,

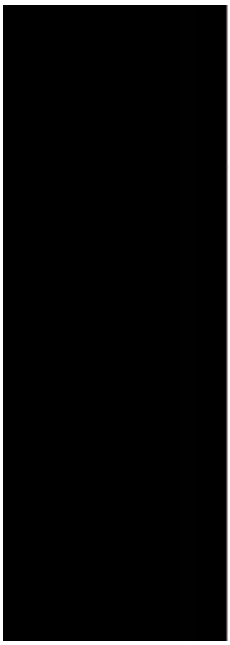
Day after day new plots broke out; and though they burst all harmlessly—the veteran bearing still, as it would seem, a charmed life—every detected scheme, punished or pardoned, left its deep sting behind. Cromwell's existence was no longer healthful—his spirit was no longer, as of yore, elastic and storm-riding as the eagle's pinion. His days were spent in bitter, because thankless, labours—his nights in agonizing apprehensions.

It was not that he trembled—it was not that a vile and dastard fear of death shook his soul from its eminence—it was not that he would have doubted any more, to hurl himself in open strife upon the deadliest hazard, now, when the monarch of the land, than when he fought a simple colonel of the ironsides—a theme of dread to others—himself dreading

Nothing could crush the tameless hardihood with which he bore up, nerved by their very pressure, against burdens, to a slighter intellect wholly unbearable—conspiracies of enemies, false-heartedness of friends, treasons and anarchy at home, insults and wars abroad. All yielded to the active vigour with which he sprang to grapple them; but by that very vigour was his own mighty spirit, like a bow overstrained by too long tension, despoiled of its own strength, its pliability, its power of renewed exertion.

The capture of the rich West Indian isles—the persecutions of the Vaudois remitted at the first hint of his potential voice—the all-important port of Dunkirk, so long the secret aim of England's politic ambition, ceded to his victorious arms—cast a bright gleam, indeed, on his declining years; but it was like the last effort of the wintry sunshine, that gilds, but leaves no impress of its glory, on the snow-mantled earth.

A nearer sorrow, a more domestic grief, was destined to wear through the last link of the



the gigantic energies of
which had, throughout
nothing that could co
had not been subdue
whelmed by its indo
his best beloved daug
valuable worth—mode
feminine, and gentle ;
most decisive—a princi
—a permanence and r
most immovable—and
on her father, the most
—lay wasting on a bed

Throughout the whol
those realms wherein th
affections have ever flo
—there lived not any f

the ruler! Hard as he was abroad, cold and unbending in all outward show, in his domestic hours none were more warm than he, more playful, or affectionate.

Thus constituted toward all his children, the dearest to his feelings, as the most prized and valued in his judgment, was Elizabeth; who, now consumed by a mortal malady, was waning, hourly before his eyes. She was the only one of all his family, the only one of all his friends save Edgar Ardenne, who had dared ever to remonstrate with him during the upward course of his ambition. She had confronted many a time his sophistry with that most sound of all philosophies, the pure creed of the Christian; she had rebuked his zealous and fanatic superstitions with regulated and sincere religion; she had accused him of that restless and insatiate ambition, which she perceived, or fancied she perceived, to be the instigator and the planner, it might be unsuspected even by himself, of all his darker actions. She had rebuked him during the trial—she had besought him on her bended knees before the execution of the iKng,

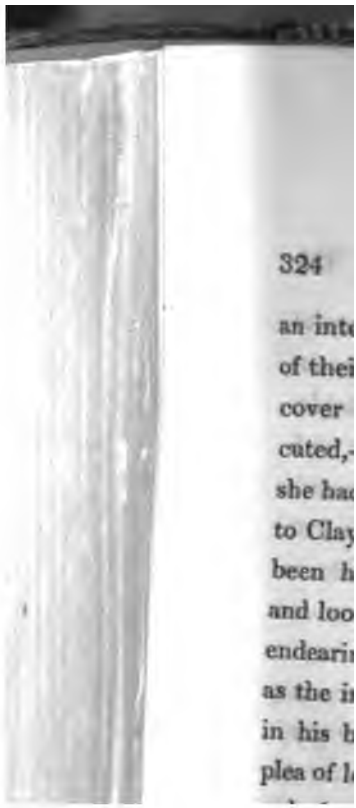
she had not once—no r
—complained, or mur
She had not once rep
which it was now too
had ever been the sooth
When fits of his accus
had overcome him with
visions ominous of woe
calm monitress, inculcat
creed—exhorting him to
path to pardon and to p

It was strange that r
plenitude of power, the
he most keenly felt were
human beings, who ha
ceived the earliest, and
most darling objects of

with a sharp painful yearning, as to the only feeling of his heart entirely pure and unmixed with aught worldly, to his affection for Elizabeth, and his regret for Ardenne.

Never, since he had fixed his firm seat on the bloody throne of Charles, had his most cherished daughter been what she was in his more innocent and humbler days. Her smile was as sweet, yet it was now no longer joyous; her cheek lost its roses, and her form its roundness; a glassy film veiled her soft eye; and he—the father—saw it, and knew, yet could not reconcile himself to the approaching woe. He felt himself to be (unutterable anguish!) the slayer of his chosen child! And seeing, knowing, feeling all this—it was his lot to deal the last blow to her gentle being—to launch the last shaft that should ever rankle in her bosom with the envenomed barbs of mortal sorrow.

Hewet, who with Sir Henry Slingsby, had on most positive unquestionable proof been condemned for conspiracy against the power and life of Oliver,—whom party prejudice cannot deny to have been guilty of the intent to kill—



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loosing of the floodgates of the soul; the awful vehement outpourings of a strong man's despair.

From that day forth he left not her bedside, neither by day nor yet by night, tending her with all a woman's care and more than all a woman's love; soothing her every phantasy—feigning to be, or it may be persuading himself also that he would be, all she could wish him—praying and weeping with her.

Nothing could be more beautiful, more pious, or more touching, than the conduct of that gray-haired usurper, mourning as one that had no hope beyond her grave, beside his daughter's deathbed. But wretched as the consolation would have been, to have caught on his lips her last expiring sigh, to have felt reflected on his own the last glance of her glazing eyes—that wretched consolation was denied to him;—for as the body of his sweet child wasted, so did her mind wane likewise; and, for many days before the termination of her sufferings, she would at times burst into fits of the most frantic and insane delirium.

These, as the time of her decease drew nearer, became more and more vehement and frightful;

quainted with the imperiousness of Cromwell's will. But he withdrew only from her death-bed, to lie down upon his own.

Shattered before by the incessant cares, which he for many months had undergone, the whole weight of the government resting upon his single shoulders; relaxed by nervousness, suspicion, superstition, and remorse; this last blow broke him down. His old complaint, the ague—which had attacked him first in Scotland, and shaken, if it had not actually undermined his constitution—returned upon him with redoubled violence, and in a few days brought him down to the very threshold of the grave.

But it was not, in truth, the ailment only of the corporeal shell—it was the intolerable burden of "that perilous stuff, that weighs upon the heart." Had the mind been at ease, the sickness of the body would have been of small account. "The sorrows written on the brain," were not to rage out, nor the stuffed bosom to be cleansed. The scabbard, fretted long ago, was now at length worn out by the keen

by the same fire which
been the sole agent of it

CHAPTER III.

Then happy, low, lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!
King Henry IV. Part II.

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon death's purple altar now
See where the victor victim bleeds.
All hands must come
To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.
SHIRLEY.

ON a sweet August evening the streets were fast growing thin, as the many-tongued and busy crowd that had chafed and fretted throughout the day, like waves, in every channel of the great metropolis, gradually

few, however, might b
scattered groups in the
some hurrying, as be
footsteps homeward, s
along as if to catch tl
the evening breeze.

Among these groups
properly be termed s
persons, the one a ma
the middle age, with so
and long light-brown h
natural curls over the
doublet; the other a
might beseem the page
whose shoulder the el
what heavily with his l

which, seeming to see all things, were in truth sealed up in rayless night.

No words were interchanged between the pair as they passed onward to Whitehall, at a pace suitable to the infirmity of the chief personage; but when they reached the palace-gate, the page spoke shortly in a low voice to the sentinel on duty—who was engaged in parleying with a gentleman on horseback of military air, and noble bearing. The blind man was already passing in, when suddenly the stranger, who, it seemed, had been refused admittance, cast his eye on the boy's companion, and instantly addressed him.

"Well met—and in good season!" he exclaimed, "if my eyes play me not a trick, my excellent friend Milton." — The blind man's countenance flashed with a joyous light, as he replied, "Well met, indeed! Well met, and welcome, after long ye ars of absence; for sure I am mine ears deceive me not, though it be one, whose accents I but little counted should ever greet them more, Sir Edgar Ardenne!"

"It is indeed!" answered the horseman.

but this hour arrived in l
am I to see one of the tw
whom I have now any tie
and, if I may judge from
in health."

"I thank you," answere
affectionately his friend's
heartily, by His great me
one infirmity, I am sound,
and body! But, tell me-
you here, I judge who is t
whom you still esteem yo
do aught for you — I a
secretary?"

"I would, if it were p
answered, "see the Protect
amends, and would fain t

ease, and has denied me entrance. I trust he is not seriously diseased?"

Milton shook his head, and the expression of his countenance, so joyful at the recognition of his friend, altered perceptibly.

"He is indeed much ailing—we trust not mortally; but his old ague hath returned to him, and what with that, and deep anxiety for Lady Claypole's health, and over labouring in the service of the state, he is reduced so greatly that his physicians *fear*. Yet is he marvellously held up by faith in the Lord; and all his chaplains have assurance, strongly impressed upon their hearts, that he shall live, not die! I doubt not he will see you, and forthwith; for often hath he spoken of you lately, and as of one whom he once cherished greatly, and greatly regrets alway!"

Without further words, Milton bade the page send some one straightway to lead hence Sir Edgar's horse, and to desire the chamberlain acquaint his highness that John Milton was below with an old friend and comrade, Sir Edgar Ardenne.

officer of the Prot
his appearance, and i
highness was engaged
tations with worthy n
of his chaplains, but
find leisure to receive t
no little courtesy in
Milton whispered to
suite which Oliver at pr

Nearly an hour pas
received any further wo
congenial spirits had s
narrate to the other, tha
lag, and it was with a
wonder that they heard t
just as the chamberlain
the wish of the Protecto
chamber.

They entered, and pro

cheeked, and heavy-eyed, and with a wild expression of anxiety and pain on his thin features, there lay the mighty being, from whom Sir Edgar had last parted in the pride of manhood, in the plenitude of power, in the indomitable confidence of his own unresisted faculties.

On one side of his pillow sat Hugh Peters, his familiar chaplain, a stern and gloomy-looking fanatic, intently occupied as it would seem in studying his pocket-bible. On the other side sat his wife, a lady of majestic bearing although wanting somewhat in the easy dignity which is acquired only by residence from childhood upward in courtly circles; also two of her daughters, the ladies Falconbridge and Rich, who had been summoned from their sister's deathbed, by an express bearing tidings of their father's dangerous seizure.

An air of deep gloom pervaded the apartment, and melancholy sat like a cloud upon the comely faces of the younger ladies. His wife repressed all outward demonstrations of disquiet, in obedience to the wish of Oliver,

ness should be compl
the people whom he h
to govern for their goo

Calm, as he was, a
times, Ardenne could
voice as to prevent it
dressed his old comm
slowly down his chee
ravages which grief an
wrought on his expres
culean form. But Crom
nor noticed the unusua
tation. As he perceive
mighty gleam of exulta
worn lineaments, and hi
with honest triumph.
and had often pondered
had heard from the sinc

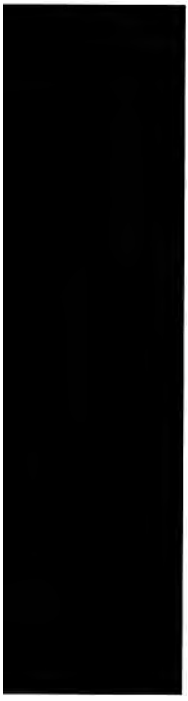
he had sought him out unsummoned, he felt the proud conviction, that this man's mind was altered—that this late visit was a confession of his error — a token of his approbation and goodwill. All this rushed on the dying ruler's soul at once; and in the midst of pain, and doubt, and peril, he exulted—exulted, that the only man in his whole realm whose disapproval he had dreaded, and whose applause he valued, had by this long-delayed approach to reconciliation sealed his avowal that in ruling England, *he* had governed not for his own aggrandizement, but for his people's welfare.

"Ha! Edgar Ardenne," he cried in tones resembling more his ancient voice of power than any which for many a mournful day he had sent forth. "Though late, I greet thee—I rejoice to see thee—yea! as a trusty friend—a valued and long-lost companion! Verily hath it relieved me of wellnigh half my ailment, to grasp again this honest hand of thine, to hear once more the accents of a voice, which no man ever heard to utter aught save words of truth and honour. I thank thee,

early!"

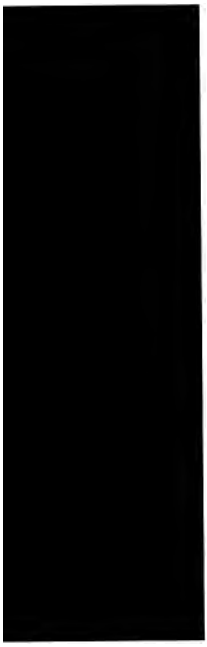
Again Ardenne was mu
that Oliver perceived it,
hand, which he had still
burning grasp, "Think
gravely of this matter; 'tis
a paltry fever. Surely we
such real perils, and rid
with an unblenching hea
that it is not for us to q
the soul, if that a petty a
mortal sinews. I tell th
hath heard our prayer—n
men's — HE hath yet ne
appointed place on earth—
up his servant into the ja
thee *years* are yet before u
fulness, and happiness, and

"Not on this side the grave," Ardenne replied. "When last we parted, I was—I own it—blinded! — blinded by wrongful and unmerited suspicion. I thought you selfish, and ambitious—I foresaw that you *must* be the ruler of this land, and I fancied that to be so, had been the aim and object of your life—that you had wrested circumstance to your advantage—made time and tide your slaves. I own, I was in error—and with me, to own is to repair. The elder Charles was, I confess, unfit to reign, unfit to *live!*—for had he lived, we must have warred with him for ever. He dead—there was no choice save between you, and a republic—and pardon me, that I believed it your intent to seize the reins of government at once on the King's death; and that, believing so, I deemed your agency in that great trial as mere deceit and fraud. Justly however—honestly—you suffered the experiment to work; and had the people been—as in my poor opinion never people were, nor will be, while this universe exists—capable of self-government, fit to elect their rulers, or willing



longer. Better—far bette
one tyrant, than ten thou
are no tyrant; but the
most prosperous monarc
governed Britons. Dread
at home, you have indeed,
to me long years ago—yo
the mere name of Englis
and as widely honoured,
of antique Roman. Yo
flatter, nor deceive; but
onward my own thought
ration for unjust suspicio
it.—So far then we are
as to the man who has ma
freer, happier than ever s
as to the undisputed and
the soil, I tender you

and have judged aright—the boldness of your former censure confirms the frankness of your present praise. *You* only dared upbraid me with ambition—*you* only envy not the greatness which has been thrust upon me. Surely, could England have been free and tranquil and at peace, never had I sat on this thorny eminence. But the Lord willed it so—and as he wills, it must be. I thank you, and most cordially do I accept your service, and frankly do I tell you, it will avail me much;—for you I *may* trust; and save only you, and excellent John Milton, I know not any other. The heathen have come round about me, and digged pits, and woven snares on every side. Traitors are in my guard—false prophets in my chamber—spies and assassins are every where —daggers around my pillow—and ratsbane in my cup! Yet, by the Lord's help, have I set them all at nought; and confident am I that he will not abandon me. Truly of all his mercies, none do I esteem more wonderful than this, that he hath given me once more in you a friend after mine own heart, and a faithful coadjutor!"



indeed, as he himself ha
half his ailment had been
opportune and unexpect
whom perhaps *alone*
honoured.

There is no truth mo
those most practised i
most sensibly perceive,
absence of deceit in othe
Cromwell, who was un
sort, though for the mos
deceiver of the world, adn
very frankness of bold hon
possessed not. It may l
by his wild fanatical opin
believing himself the
inspirations, looked on h

outcast. Doubtful and wavering, then, in his own sense of right, in his own conscience, how natural that he should draw deep comfort to his unquiet soul, from the assurance that a man, whom he knew to have perused his heart more narrowly than any living being, and to have judged of him at one time with such harshness as to abandon him, now looked on his career with an approving eye—now bade him hail as the protector of his country's honour—now tendered his allegiance, and professed his willingness to follow, wherever he should lead. How natural that he should feel this as a confirmation of what he would fain believe—as a proof to himself of his own half-suspected honesty.

Such were, it is most probable, the causes of the powerful effect produced on Oliver by the return of Ardenne; and truly it was wellnigh supernatural. Till a late hour of the night he kept him by his side, conversing cheerfully, nay almost joyously, on his own future prospects, on the advancement of his country's interests abroad, on the diffusion of intelligence, and of religion, at home. And Ardenne, — feeling that he had wronged Cromwell in his first

traces of fresh tears upon her cheek; and whispered Lady Falconbridge, who in turn left the chamber for a while, and coming back again called out her sister.

It was most strange, that although this dumb show continued for so long a time that Ardenne, and even the blind poet, perceived that something must be seriously amiss, Cromwell did not notice it. He was, however, so much reinvigorated—his spirits had so wondrously regained their elasticity—that he talked on, and smiled, and even jested, until so deep a gloom had fallen on his auditors, infected by the evident and hopeless sorrow, engraved in characters so legible upon the wobegone and pallid face of Lady Cromwell, that he could not continue longer in his happy ignorance.—

"Ha!—what is this?" he cried, looking around from face to face in blank bewilderment—"What is to do? speak out—I say"—he gasped—his voice, which had but lately been so strong, now scarcely audible—"Ardenne, speak out—*you* never have deceived me."

And then, before he could receive an answer, had it been possible for Edgar to have answered, as his eye met his wife's—"I see," he said—

upon which he had bee
posture, and though he
maintain his wonted an
effort was too great f
For a few seconds' sp
then stretching out his
teeth chattered in his
shook as if palsied, and
poured down his hollo
he cried, "my God,
forsaken me?"—

Then pulling the cov
he turned his face to th
agony of sobs, and
vulsions, that haunted
he had quitted the ap
and dying parent.

CHAPTER IV.

Beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and (happier!) yield his breath.
Childe Harold.

It was the third day of September — the anniversary of Worcester and of Dunbar — the lucky day of Cromwell—the day marked out, as he believed, by planetary influence—the day whereon he never yet had undertaken aught, but he therefrom had reaped a golden harvest! And it would have appeared indeed, to any who beheld the conflict of the elements that day, that something of great import to the nations was portended;—for, at the earliest dawn, the skies were overspread with a deep lurid crimson, and the sun rose, although there was no mist on the horizon, like a huge ball

with such strange fury, as
could liken or compare i
themselves beheld, or h
fathers. The largest tree
their earthfast roots, and
before the whirlwind; cl
toppled and crashed ince
killed in open fields by th
elements; the seas were
the lands were heaped with

Nor did these prodigies
only, or in one degree of la
to south, from east to wes
tempest swept over every
and at the selfsame hou
with desolation. The san
vessels of the hardy Nor
steril rocks, and plunged
the vexed depths of the

tending fury of the winds, shifting and veering momently from point to point round the whole compass, and the incessant streams of "fire from heaven" united to make up a scene of horror such as the Christian world never perhaps witnessed, either before or since. And amid that strange din and warfare, the parting soul of him, who had so swayed the mightier influence of human passions to his will, who had so ridden fearlessly through the more murderous, if less appalling, strife of human warfare, was struggling to take wing—to flee away and be at rest.

On the preceding night, all Cromwell's physicians had pronounced his cure impossible—his dissolution speedy and certain; for since the death of his beloved daughter he had not closed an eye by night, or enjoyed any intermission from the recurring fits of ague and of fever. Yet still, his preachers buoyed him up with their insane and impious blasphemies; asserting that the Lord, even the Lord who cannot lie, had promised them that this his servant should recover; and even when the mortal pains had yielded to the weakness of

tures of his wife, he took
hand, and said, "Fear no
nor think that I shall die
contrary."

"Oh! sir," said Arden
since their reconciliation, h
pillow for a moment, "oh!
They are no friends to you,
you any longer. Your trust
for you have wellnigh done
one of your physicians believ
to-morrow. They that would
have lost their reason."

"Say not," he instantly
have lost my reason. I t
truth. I know it from au
than any you can have from
crates. It is the answer of th

then, cheerfully, banishing all sorrow from your looks. Ye may have skill in the nature of things, yet nature can do more than all physicians put together; and God is far more above nature!"

It was in vain that Edgar, who could not endure that he should go hence in this wild and terrible delusion, argued with him, professing his sincerity with tears, and urging on him the necessity of immediate preparation, unless he would rush headlong into his Maker's presence, unhouseled and unshriven!—It was in vain that he remonstrated with the fanatical and blinded monitors, who to the last assured their victim of speedy restoration. By Peters, Sterry, and the rest, Ardenne was rebuked as an unthinking carnal-minded person, setting at nought the intimations of the Holy one—a scoffer, and blasphemer!—and Cromwell was admonished to put from him one whose presence in his chamber might well draw down upon its inmate some dread manifestation of Divine displeasure. But to this Oliver objected so decidedly, that they dared urge it no further.

"He is sincere," he answered to their exhortations, "but in much error. The Lord

fied, it may well be, than u
opportunities of grace, and
He shall not leave me. Tu
say, he *shall* not! Begone
alone be near me!"

His will was instantly ob
the livelong night Sir Edgar
bed; and on that night, for
Lady Claypole's death, did s
eyes:—but sleep how terri
nurse of nature, but its co
eyes closed in slumber, the
cherished while awake, forse
in all its terrors glared on
His features, bold, still, and
and emaciate, were frightful
agonies of terror and despai
in dark beaded bubbles on
thin hair seemed to the

"Keep them away!" he cried, in words painfully clear and thrilling, "keep them away! —What would they with me? No! no!—I am not ready—I will *not*—do they not hear me say—I will *not* die!"

And he ground his teeth violently, and struggled as with persons striving to drag him down.

Appalled beyond expression, Sir Edgar touched him gently, and he awoke; but still unconscious and bewildered he continued for a moment to resist and mutter, "Avaunt! get thee behind me! for what have I to do with thee thou Evil one?"

Then, recognising Ardenne, he forced a feeble smile, and muttering something of a fearful dream, composed himself again to rest; and, after a few moments, was again asleep. But instantly again the vision came upon him; and this time his eyes were opened wide, and stared abroad as if he were awake.

"Away with it," he gasped; "away with that blood-stained and headless trunk!—why dost thou glare on me, discrowned spirit, thou canst not say *I* judged thee?—King! King! —there be *no* kings in England—the *man*, the

—there be no kings in E

Again he woke, and o
time he sunk into a p
slumber, which lasted, a
easy, until the morning
Then, with a start that
pillow,

" Devil!" he muttered
teeth; " ha! devil, was
didst break my childish
should be the First in
didst plunge my stainless s
of blood—my king's—my
child's?—Blood! blood!"

He shrieked aloud, an
touched him; but as he wa
to encounter or abash him,
to sleep, and heard him

Ardenne beheld him through his half-shut lids raise himself on his knees, and with clasped hands, pour forth a prayer befitting rather, as Ludlow afterward observed when it was found transcribed among his papers, "a mediator's than a sinner's deathbed!"—"Lord," he exclaimed, "although I am a wretched and a miserable creature, I am in covenant with thee through grace; and I may, I *will*, come unto thee for thy people. Thou hast made me a mean instrument to do *them* good, and *thee* service; and many of them have set too high a value on me, though others wish and would be glad of my death. But, Lord, however thou dost dispose of me, continue to go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation, and make the name of Christ glorious throughout the world. Teach those who look too much upon thy instruments, to depend more upon thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are thy people too; and pardon the folly of this short prayer, for Jesus Christ his sake, and give us a good night if it be thy pleasure."

pardon, poured forth thes
he laid him down and sl
seemed refreshing sleep,
of the lurid sun shone
Then starting up again,
out, "hell hath got hold
of hell have compassed
have leaped out of bed upo
had not caught him in his

At the same moment
the tempest burst suddenl
ing upon the terrified and
the storm fell unheeded o
and of his sole attendant; b
moved, the one by the r
tremendous dreams, the ot
pity, and dismay, to think
ternal.

chamber. He spoke to all, kindly and cheerfully; but Edgar saw at once that all the overweening confidence of the preceding day had left him; and, though the fanatics continued to rave in his ears, promising present health and future glory, he listened with indifference, and his eye no longer flashed at their bold prophecies, nor did he answer any thing, nor prophesy at all himself, though called on frequently throughout the day, by Peters, to say something to the Lord, and to make intercession.

For the most part he lay still upon his back, with his hands folded on his breast, and his face perfectly composed and calm; but twice or thrice a short quick spasm twitched the muscles of his mouth; and once he wrung his hands, perhaps unconsciously. He spoke but seldom, and then only in short sentences, evidently growing weaker every moment. Once he remarked upon the day—*his* anniversary—but, strange to tell, he noticed not at all the furious tempest, which shook the very palace-roof above him, and, saving in its lulls, drowned every sound of voice or motion.

Toward noon he dozed a little while, and on his waking called to Peters.

off by any means, and ever
thereafter, so as to peril his

"Surely he cannot!' ans
"He that is *once* in grac
backslide, nor fall, nor even
doth thereafter is of grace, a
his life is precious—his salva

"Soh!" answered the d
am safe—for sure I am, t
grace!"

Shocked beyond all expres
fain have once again renewe
but, just as he began, Crom
family—embraced them one
instantly sank into a letha
which no efforts of his now
could arouse him. At lengt

the sound commingling with his recollections of the day. "Lambert, bring up the cannon! charge there! charge with your pikes, valiant and trusty Goff!"

"His mind is at Dunbar," whispered one of the military men to Ardenne. "But lo! wherefore do they torment him?"

The question was produced by a late effort on the part of some about his person, to induce the dying ruler to declare who should succeed him. To a direct straightforward question he gave no answer; then he was asked, should Richard be the next Protector? and a faint motion of his head—casual, as it seemed to Ardenne, and unmeaning—was construed to imply assent.

A little longer he gasped feebly without speaking. Another crash of thunder appeared to split the very firmament, and the blue flickering lightning fearfully glanced upon the dying soldier's pale stern features. They kindled in the glare, and the eye flashed, and the hand was waved aloft.

"On!" he exclaimed. "On, ironsides! Down with the sons of Zeruiah!" Then, in a feebler tone, "Ha!" he continued, "have at thee! What again? Dismounted—oh! dismounted!

...and calm nerveless—the strife was over!

There was a deep hus awfully solemn and impre sob first broke the spell—a of his first follower—his las

"There passed the spi man, England has ever s soul! His faults die with never, while the round w his fame be forgotten, or done his country, pass away weep! Your benefactor i foresee much strife, much a But he, who hath gone he seed of thy prosperity, thy glory; and thou shalt reap and thy sons for many a